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Heseltine and Patten attack Hague

Tory split reopened over Europe



Hague under fire

By JILL SHERMAN AND ANDREW PIERCE

MICHAEL HESELTINE yesterday launched another damaging attack on William Hague, plunging the Tory party into even deeper crisis after its humiliating defeat in the Winchester by-election.

The former Deputy Prime Minister reopened Tory divisions over Europe by giving his full backing to Peter Temple-Morris, the pro-European MP, who resigned from the Conservatives yesterday after having the party whip withdrawn.

Mr Hague's difficulties were compounded last night when Chris Patten, the former Hong Kong Governor, also delivered a thinly veiled attack on his leadership,

warning him not to be "nationalistic". In a magazine article, the former party chairman calls on Mr Hague to do more to stamp his mark on the political landscape and warns that he will prolong his spell in opposition unless he takes a more pragmatic approach on Europe.

As the Tories were struggling to come to terms with the by-election result in Winchester when Mark Oaten, the Liberal Democrat saw his majority soar from two votes to 21,000, Mr Heseltine openly criticised the Tory leader for removing

the whip from Mr Temple-Morris. "I think it's an unwise and unnecessary decision. Peter Temple-Morris has loyally supported Conservative prime minister one after the other as they sought to establish Britain's self-interest in Europe," he said.

"He represents a stream of opinion within the Conservative Party that we should seek to encourage, not to divorce."

Mr Heseltine rocked the boat earlier this month, when he criticised Mr Hague's decision to take such a hard-line on the single currency, by

ruling it out for ten years. Mr Patten went further, in an article in *The World in 1998*, which is published by *The Economist*.

He wrote: "Mr Hague should avoid the nasty rightwing nationalism found elsewhere in Europe. Being tainted with it would ensure only that Mr Blair's tenure of his present position is much longer than Mr Hague would like."

Tory strategists were determined to bolster morale after the disastrous result in the Winchester by-election suffered by Gerry Malone, the for-

mer Aberdeen Tory MP. There was little comfort either from the Beckenham by-election where Jacqui Lait scraped home with a much reduced majority of 1,227.



Leading article and Letters, page 23

Malone: disaster poll

Child sex police raid two public schools

By STEWART TENDLER AND PAUL WILKINSON

TWO leading Northern public schools were raided yesterday by detectives in a national police operation against a suspected child pornography ring.

Sedburgh School in Cumbria and Durham School were among 15 addresses visited in dawn raids. Homes in London, Hampshire, Merseyside, Surrey, West Mercia and Wiltshire were also searched during an investigation code-named Operation Clarence.

The suspects include three teachers and a former teacher but senior detectives said that the investigation is not centred on schools. They said the suspects came from a variety of backgrounds and a number of them knew each other.

Police refused to comment on any links with a series of raids on private schools over the past two years or investigations "into sex tourism in countries such as Thailand."

No arrests were made yesterday but police said a large quantity of films, papers and computer material was seized for examination. Police have yet to discover whether they are dealing with a suspected distribution network or whether material has been photographed or filmed by pupils.

As police began sifting through the material, officers

from Scotland Yard's paedophile and child pornography squad, which led the operation, said hundreds of video films were taken for viewing.

Detective Chief Inspector Jim Reynolds, head of the squad, said: "This is a major operation that has been going on for about three years. This is a result of intelligence gathering by all the forces involved and a quantity of material has been seized, including videos, computer equipment and correspondence. I am hopeful this will lead to prosecutions and further intelligence."

Sedburgh, which has 344 boys and fees of more than £12,000 a year, was attended by former England rugby captain Will Carling. Durham is a mixed school with 134 pupils and fees over £10,000.

Cumbria police said material was taken from living quarters at Sedburgh which is not an area used by pupils. Material, including video tapes and other equipment was seized from Durham School and a private house.

Christopher Hirst, the headmaster of Sedburgh, said: "I can confirm that the police have requested the school's co-operation in certain inquiries they are conducting. As yet we have not been made aware in detail of the reasons for the inquiries. The school continues to function normally."

Other addresses raided include a home in Donhead St Andrew, south of Salisbury. Hampshire police made a number of searches and material was taken. One address was searched in Merseyside but nothing was seized. Videos were taken from an address in Worcester by West Mercia police.

An address in Surrey was also checked but nothing was taken. In London police raided addresses in Harrow, Chesham, Islington, Croydon and Albany Street near Regent's Park.

Police are known to have launched investigations into links between private schools and child pornography after allegations from a former teacher at Abberley Hall in Herefordshire in 1995. Last year two staff at Hurstpierpoint College in Sussex were dismissed after being given a police caution for possessing indecent material.

In August this year the body of Adrian Stark, director of music at St John's School, Leatherhead, Surrey, was found at the base of Beachy Head after he had been charged with three charges of possessing indecent pictures of children. He had formerly worked at Hurstpierpoint.



Canary Wharf and the Millennium Dome photographed from near the Thames Barrier. A brochure coming out next week will extol the dome's "fun and fascination"

Case dropped against alleged USAF hacker

By STEPHEN FARRELL

A SUSPECTED hacker charged with breaking into US Air Force computers causing damage estimated at £300,000 walked free from court yesterday.

Matthew Bevan, 23, smiled as he left Belmarsh Crown Court, south-east London, with representatives of a tabloid newspaper six months after a London teenager, Richard Pryce, was fined £1,200 for admitting similar offences carried out when he was sixteen.

Prosecutors decided it was not in the public interest to pursue a costly case expected to last up to three months involving witnesses flown from America to give evidence against Bevan, the son of a Fraud Squad detective.

The decision comes three and a half years after two hackers codenamed Kuji and Datastream Cowboy used the

Internet to penetrate Rome Laboratories, the US Air Force's premier command and control research facility at Griffiss Base in New York.

Sources close to the US investigation said the intrusions had "serious implications" but did not involve national security. According to a report to the US Senate Affairs Committee the intruders gained access in March 1994 to unclassified files held at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre and computers belonging to Lockheed.

Pryce, from Colindale, north London, who went on to win a scholarship to study the double bass at the Royal College of Music, was fined after he admitted 12 charges of gaining unauthorised access under the Computer Misuse Act. Magistrates heard that he "caused more harm than the KGB".

Another institution alleged-

ly penetrated by the pair was Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, where wilder elements among UFO conspiracy theorists believe alien spacecraft are secretly held.

Bevan, who cheerfully acknowledges being obsessed with aliens, nevertheless denied three charges of gaining unauthorised access to USAF and Lockheed computers between March and May 1994.

The charges related to the alteration of data by the alleged insertion of a "sniffer" program designed to gain access to systems.

The investigation was carried out by Scotland Yard's specialist Computer Crime Unit and the US Air Force's Office of Special Investigations (OSI).

Initial charges of conspiracy against the pair were discontinued at an earlier hearing.

The hacker's world, page 4

Army horses outrank tanks

By MICHAEL EVANS AND NICHOLAS WOOD

THE ARMY now owns more horses than tanks, a Government "Domesday Book" of national assets will reveal. The register, to be published by the Treasury, is expected to show that on April 1 there were 396 Challenger tanks and 433 horses.

Horses are the only live assets in the list because they have a value of more than £500 each.

Not included are the Army's 1,800 dogs and regimental mascots - two goats, one black buck, one reindeer, two

Shetland ponies, one wolfhound, one drum horse, one ferret and a tiger.

The ratio of horses to tanks in the Army has varied since the Second World War, from the days when there were more mules than tanks, and some colonial armies were mounted. The Army used mules to deliver food and other stores to British troops during the early peace-keeping days in Bosnia and they were hired locally.

The register will list every government department's possessions that have any value.

The MoD will take up half

the register of assets because of its huge stock of properties - more than 90,000 - as well as its weapon systems and training land. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will use the register to pave the way for a new round of state sell-offs.

However, the main area for cuts at the MoD will be in its portfolio of properties and estates. The Armed Forces have already faced significant cutbacks in equipment.

Apart from the 386 Challengers, there are 386 of the new Challenger 2 tank on order but when they come into service they will replace the older Challengers.

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TODAY IN THE TIMES



'She looked more at ease with herself than she has done for years'

Alan Hamilton on the Queen, PAGES 8 and 9



'I always fall in love with people I work with'

Valerie Grove meets Sally Potter, PAGE 21



'I may grow a Hemingway beard'

Ken Clarke on his new image, PAGE 30

Campaigners for disabled reject plan to cut benefits

The Government wants to concentrate state help on the most severely handicapped. Jill Sherman reports

CAMPAIGNERS for the disabled yesterday reacted strongly against government plans to cut benefits for the 6.5 million disabled people in Britain and force many into work.

Ministers confirmed that the Government was drawing up proposals to restructure the five main benefits for the sick and disabled as part of the Treasury's spending review.

The main objective is to try to get as many people as possible into work so that benefits can be concentrated on those with the most severe handicaps. Options being considered include taxing, means-testing or time-limiting some benefits and replacing others with insurance-based schemes.

But the plans, backed by Gordon Brown and Harriet

Harman, the Social Security Secretary, which are still at an early stage, have already caused a row in the Cabinet. Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, and John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, are said to be strongly opposed to many of the suggestions, and the Liberal Democrats have called for a full Commons debate on the issue.

Lorna Reith, director of the Disability Alliance, an umbrella group for 300 disabled groups, said: "We are appalled that the Government is prepared to consider options that will reduce the living standards of disabled people

so drastically. We are very concerned that if they remove disability benefits from disabled people who work it will make it impossible for them to continue working."

Mencap, representing mentally handicapped people, said: "The reality is people have low incomes and high expenses. The facts are against the Government and the public will be against them. For a severely disabled person not in employment, total benefit levels are a small fraction of the earnings non-disabled workers take for granted."

Lord Morris of Manchester, a long-time campaigner for

the disabled and the architect of many of their benefits, was also furious about the plans. The former Labour MP pointed out that disabled people had had no real income increase since 1980, when the Government broke the link between benefits and prices.

He also insisted that all disabled people would prefer to be in work than on benefit. "There is not a single person who would not prefer to have the independence and dignity of the taxpayer rather than dependence on social security," Lord Morris said.

The disability bill has risen from £4.1 billion in 1982 to

£23.5 billion last year and is now responsible for nearly a quarter of the £100 billion social security bill. Ministers are determined not only to curb the growth but to cut the bill by trying to get more disabled people into work.

A spokesman from the Department of Social Security said: "Ministers want to ensure that the DSS helps those who can get into work get into work, and gives appropriate support to those who cannot get into work."

Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said that any future proposals would be entirely consistent with manifesto pledges. "People supported us because we were prepared to review government spending right across the board."



The Austin 10 in the shadow of a Spitfire at the RAF Museum yesterday. Churchill preferred the car to something more ostentatious

Churchill's wartime car up for sale

By KEVIN EASON
MOTORING EDITOR

IT WAS hardly stately transport for a wartime leader of such stature, but Winston Churchill loved his little Austin 10, so much so that he refused to exchange it for something more ostentatious.

When Lady Churchill decided to trade the black Austin 10 in for a grander model befitting her husband's position, he ordered her to go back to the dealer and bring his Austin home.

Now the car which captured the affections of Britain's wartime Prime Minister could fall into foreign hands when it comes up for sale. Collectors from around Europe have contacted Sotheby's which auction the Cambridge saloon on Monday at the Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon, northwest London. The price is between £4,000 and £6,000, but this could be a conservative estimate because of the car's 12-year ownership by Churchill.

Sotheby's said: "We would hope a British buyer will come forward for a car with such wonderful associations with a heroic figure in British history. Clearly, though, it has attracted interest from a lot of people around the world, particularly in

Europe, so the car might, unfortunately, leave Britain."

Churchill had a curious attachment to his Austin, one of the most unimpressive models of the pre-war years and manufactured at a time when Rolls-Royce, Daimler, Bentley and Land Rover were all making majestic models with worldwide reputations for quality and performance. Reputation obviously did not matter to Churchill as much as reliability, or perhaps he had high regard for Herbert Austin, founder of the Birmingham carmaker and a resolute patriot.

In any event, the logbook shows Churchill's signature as the first owner, taking delivery of EYH 409 on June 3, 1938. The little four-door is hardly luxurious, its red leather interior no more than spartan and the sit-up-and-beg driving seat seemingly too small for Churchill's ample frame. Even the ash-tray seems hardly big enough to cope with his legendary cigars, though there is a sliding sunroof and folding windscreen.

Power was also not a premium feature: the car's 1,125cc, four-cylinder could generate only 10 horse power so a fair wind at the rear would be needed to struggle past the 40mph mark. The Austin did have one exclusive feature: a new type of pressed steel "easy clean" spoked wheels, though it is hard to imagine the former Prime Minister going at them with bucket and sponge.

Churchill used the car throughout the war years, famously photographed by the boomer of the Austin during one of his frequent outings. He sold the car in 1950 but it was bought at auction in 1967 by the sixth Marquess of Bath for £1,350 and kept at the Longleat estate in Wiltshire. A restoration in 1983, costing £6,335, has put the car in the near-new condition that Churchill enjoyed. The present marquess is selling the car to clear space as part of a rearrangement of his estate.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Hague declines to name Tory donors

William Hague has rejected a challenge from Tony Blair to disclose the names of donors who have given money to the Conservative Party in recent years. Mr Hague said in a letter that it would "dishonourable" to release details of people who had given money on a confidential basis.

The Labour leadership hopes to overcome its recent embarrassment over its U-turn on tobacco sponsorship, and a donation to the party from the Formula One chief, Bernie Ecclestone, by focusing on the Conservatives' refusal to disclose details about its donors. In the Commons this week, Mr Blair offered to name Labour's donors going back ten years if the Tories would do the same. Mr Hague refused to be drawn. Mr Hague has now rejected the Prime Minister's challenge in his letter to Mr Blair yesterday, which was copied to Sir Patrick Neill, the standards watchdog.

Bruno marriage denial

Frank Bruno, right, the former world heavyweight boxing champion, has denied "wild allegations" in the press that his marriage was in trouble after he had assaulted his wife. The denial by Mr Bruno, 36, of Standon Massey, near Brentwood, Essex, came a day after Laura Bruno, 34, went to the High Court to obtain an order banning her husband from "assaulting, molesting or harassing her".



Legal aid reform pledge

The Government pledged to end the legal aid system as a "machine primarily for paying lawyers' bills" when it unveiled new details of plans to scrap civil legal aid and bring in "no win, no fee" work. In a attack on the £1.6 billion legal aid scheme as a "subsidy for lawyers", Geoff Hoon, parliamentary secretary at the Lord Chancellor's Department, said money which could be spent on the sick and injured was being "gobbled up in legal aid".

A-level appeals move

Leading girls' schools are calling for a review of A-level procedures because they fear that pressure from parents on schools to challenge grades is threatening the credibility of the examination. The number of appeals has risen sharply in recent years. London-based members of the Girls' Schools Association have demanded action to reduce the number of appeals and to tighten up marking sufficiently to cut the proportion of candidates being upgraded.

Hospital deaths inquiry

Police are investigating an allegation that elderly, terminally ill patients in a ward at the psychiatric Kingsway Hospital, Derby, were starved until they became so weak that they died from infections. A member of staff is understood to have reported suspicions about the deaths in a ward where many patients suffer from dementia and are difficult to feed. Derbyshire police and South Derbyshire Mental Health Trust confirmed that the investigation began a fortnight ago.

Hostage warder freed

Prison staff equipped with riot gear stormed an office where a warder was being held captive after fears for his safety suddenly mounted. The prison officer had been held for more than 18 hours by two inmates at a young offenders institute. He received cuts and bruises and was badly shaken during the operation at D-wing of the Castington secure unit near Morpeth in Northumberland. Both prisoners, who were not hurt, were arrested.

Kennel maid 'had CJD'

A 20-year-old woman is thought to have become the 22nd person to die from a form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease linked with eating contaminated beef. Vicky Rimmer, of Connaught Quay, Abercromby, had been in a coma for four years. Her body has been sent to Edinburgh for a post-mortem examination by a specialist CJD unit. Doctors believe that Miss Rimmer, a kennels worker, was infected by new variant CJD, which strikes its victims at a much younger age.

Man fined for shouting

A man who screamed at his wife so loudly that her hearing was permanently damaged was fined £450. Plymouth Crown Court was told that Peter Pryor, 58, who suffers from tinnitus, shouted at his wife, Christine: "I am going to make you suffer like I do." Judge Jeremy Griggs ordered Pryor, who had denied assault causing actual bodily harm, to carry out 150 hours' community service. The couple divorced last year.

MP attacked by dogs



The Labour MP Joe Benton, left, was recovering yesterday after two huchers attacked him while he was jogging in a London park. "I had one literally hanging off my arm by his teeth, while the other started tearing into my thigh," said the 61-year-old MP for Bootle, who spent five hours in casualty being given stitches. "I was left with blood running down my leg and in quite a state of shock. It was terrifying."

Manor from heaven

Richard Spurgeon, the manager of Colchester Zoo, has been given a 32-room house set in 12½ acres. The house, Meadow Croft in Earls Colne, Essex, had been left to its housekeeper, Jean Last, by a local businessman, Ruben Hunt, with an instruction that she give it to charity. Miss Last could find no charity willing to take the property on and so gave it to Mr Spurgeon, who has a wife and two children. His mother Pat used to deliver groceries to the house.

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Home Office

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Once a hacker, always a hacker

The boy who broke into Nasa files is unrepentant, says Stephen Farrell

PONY-TAILED Mathew Bevan, an *X-Files* addict obsessed with UFOs, lived a twin existence and saw himself as the Nick Leeson of the hacking world.

An Admiral Insurance computer operator by day, at night he sat beneath posters of his fictional FBI heroes, Mulder and Scully, hacking around the world as real-life American investigators on his electronic trail suspected him of being one of the most sophisticated and dangerous hackers they had ever encountered.

In an interview with *The Times* Bevan admitted gaining access to computers belonging to the US Air Force, Nasa and the defence contractors Lockheed, but adamantly denied ever altering data.

He insists his motive was curiosity, not personal gain. "I was after information about UFOs. I just wanted to find evidence of all the conspiracy theories — alien abductions, the 1950s Roswell landings and Nasa faking the moon landings — and where better to look than their computer files?" he said.

The US Air Force posts details of its personnel and network addresses on the



Aliens destroy the White House in *Independence Day*. The movie showed an alien spacecraft held in Area 51

Internet so anything you want you can get if you know how. It was a challenge."

Working under the nickname Kuji — the name of his cat and a martial arts death blow — he and the 16-year-old north London schoolboy, Richard Pryce, who signed himself Datastream Cowboy, allegedly caused untold damage in March 1994.

Sources close to the American investigation, however, cast doubts on his claim to have been solely motivated by interest in aliens. "This was treated as serious incident. There might have been a matter of seeing what they

could find and then working out what they could do with it."

Bevan was 12 when he got his first computer, a Sinclair ZX81, for Christmas from his parents Elaine, a nurse, and Thomas, a detective sergeant with the South Wales Fraud Squad who had no idea how the gift would alter his son's life.

Despite spending up to 36 hours at a time on the keyboard — to the irritation of his parents — the family telephone bills never exceeded £60 because he mastered the technique of "blue-boxing", gaining free calls by sending

electronic pulses down the line to trick BT software into thinking a call was over.

He had also installed a device to clear the line of tell-tale static whenever his mother picked up the extension while he was at work on the £700 Omega 500 and 1200 models with which he did most of his damage.

His Holy Grail was to prove the conspiracy theory that alien spacecraft are stored in conditions of strict secrecy at Area 51 of Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio — as suggested in the science fiction film *Independence Day*. Although he claims to have seen convincing evidence of their presence, no evidence is forthcoming.

He attacked military sites with "sniffer" and "password cracker" programs to gain entry to state-of-the-art computers. Once in they sought out the systems administrators' log-ons, copied them and became invisible to others on the network.

Their traces were covered by hitting their targets from many different countries and through a false trail of up to half a dozen other computers. Bevan still believes investigators would never have caught



Bevan: "It is all about control. I'm breaking into the biggest computers in the world from my little room"

him if Pryce had not revealed his own identity to an informant, and held Bevan's telephone number on one of his files seized by police. "I would never have been found. Their security people had no idea."

His inmostest claims are partially supported by a detailed US Air Force Office of Special Investigations dossier presented by the OSI's former computer crime unit head, Jim Christy, to a Senate committee, last year.

He admitted that both had "penetrated and compromised" Rome Laboratories, the US Air Force's premier command and control research facility at Griffiss Air Force Base in New York.

Connecting to commercial Internet providers in Seattle and New York, they accessed other sensitive targets including Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Centre in Maryland, Wright Patterson and an attempt on Nato's Brussels

headquarters. The OSI concluded: "From conduct observed through the investigators' monitoring, Kuji was a far more sophisticated hacker than the 16-year-old Datastream. He would only stay on a telephone line a short time, not long enough to be traced successfully."

Pryce was arrested at his parents home in Colindale, north London in May 1994 and Bevan in June last year. All his equipment was seized,

leading, he admits, to withdrawal symptoms. "It is all about control, really. I'm in my little room with my little computer breaking into the biggest computers in the world and suddenly I have more control over this machine than them. That is where the buzz comes from. Anyone who says they are a reformed hacker is talking rubbish. If you are a hacker, you are always a hacker. It's a state of mind."

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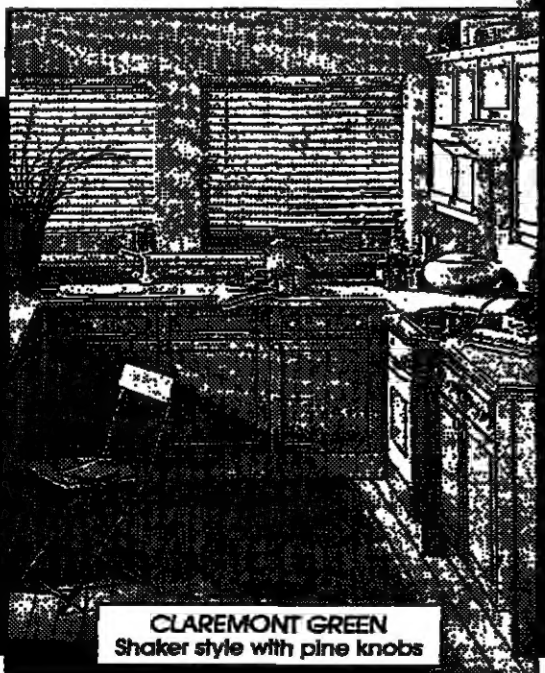
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Colonel attacks Army over son's tank death

By PETER FOSTER

A SENIOR army officer whose son was killed in a military training accident had asked him to leave the Army just weeks earlier because his unit had descended into a "leaderless rabble", an inquest was told yesterday.

Corporal Nicholas Guignard, 23, a technician with the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers (REME), was crushed to death as he repaired the main gun on a Chieftain battle tank while on exercise on Salisbury Plain.

The soldier, working with the 1st Royal Tank Regiment, was crushed under the breach of the gun as he connected a faulty power supply unit to the mains while sitting inside the tank. Cross-wiring in the unit caused the barrel to flail up and down violently.

After the accident, the Army's Board of Enquiry made ten safety recommendations, including annual safety refresher courses and a new system of labelling parts as they went for repair.

Recording a verdict of misadventure, David Masters, the Wiltshire Coroner, recommended an overhaul of the system for repairing vehicles. "I want to put an emphasis on the urgency of implementing



Lieutenant-Colonel Bernard Guignard said the unit in which his son Nicholas served seemed a rabble



the recommendations of the Board of Enquiry," he said. "This enquiry has manifestly pointed up defects in the systems of repairing line replacement equipment."

Lieutenant-Colonel Bernard Guignard, who retired in October after 35 years' service with REME, told the inquest at Salisbury Guildhall: "Nicholas told me he wasn't using the proper manuals and was making do with précis, which was anathema to me as a professional engineer. When I asked what his supervisor said about this, he told me he was training his supervisor in

tanks because his normal supervisor was elsewhere. The more questions I asked the more I became concerned that there was no level of effective management beyond his sergeant. I thought they had become a leaderless rabble."

Once his son had told him he had nearly died when a tank came dangerously close to tipping over and crushing him. Another time he had nearly been crushed by a tank while in his sleeping-bag.

The Ministry of Defence said that it would take full consideration of the coroner's recommendations.

Lack of student nurses 'poses threat to NHS'

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE National Health Service could be facing a serious shortage of nurses because of the fall in applications from young women to enter the profession. There are now more training places on offer than students applying to fill them.

and the dropout rate is growing, with one in four failing to finish the three-year course. Figures from the English National Board, which oversees the profession, show that there were 15,362 successful applications for the 16,126 training places last year. Previously, the number eligible for training outweighed the number of student places.

Even numbers inquiring about the profession are falling fast. Two years ago, 33,000 application packs were sent to young people asking about a career in nursing. Last year, 25,000 requested information.

The low number of applicants and the high dropout rate mean that the number of nurses aged under 25 has fallen: there are now more nurses on the register over retirement age than there are nurses under-25. According to the Royal College of Nursing, some 9,000 nurses are expected to qualify next year, compared with 37,000 15 years ago.

Although the number of registered nurses has risen slightly in recent years this is

because so many are being employed who are trained elsewhere. The number of British trained nurses continues to fall. There are 600,000 nurses on the register, but of these up to 35,000 are not working in nursing.

As the number of female nurses falls, the proportion of male nurses is rising. They now represent almost 10 per cent of those on the register, and are no longer predominantly working in mental health; a growing proportion are in children's wards.

"Everyone should be worried by the fall in the numbers training," a spokesman for the UK Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting said. "There has never been a period when there were so many competing jobs available for the sort of person who would make a good nurse."

Older, qualified people were increasingly returning to work after having a child, she said, "but there are not enough young people being trained now to ensure we have an adequate number of nurses in the future."

Pippa Gough, assistant director of nursing policy at the RCN, said: "This is a grave situation and it is getting worse. We're heading for the worst shortages since the start of the NHS."

THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE STUD



When Seymour Hersh began investigating President John Kennedy's notorious sex life, he found a level of debauchery that far exceeded expectations. The witnesses, however, were unassailable: a former mistress and his Secret Service bodyguards

News Review tomorrow

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Passengers are reminded that smoking is obligatory

Non-smoker Damian Whitworth found his head in the clouds when he joined tobacco enthusiasts on a special flight to Amsterdam

THE problem: the European pro-smoking lobby is holding its biannual conference in Amsterdam this weekend, but there are no flights from London to The Netherlands on which delegates can smoke. The solution: they hired their own plane and smoked for Britain.

There were two non-smokers on the flight. The first, bizarrely, was the press officer for Freedom Organisation for the Right to Enjoy Smoking Tobacco (Forest) who had chartered the plane. The second was me.

Even the most furious smokers at *The Times* said

they were relieved they were not going on this trip. Then, as we gathered in London yesterday, the director of Forest, Marjorie Nicholson, said cheerfully that I was "very brave" and presented me with a face mask before we set off. Just how much smoke could these people produce?

Stepping aboard the coach to Biggin Hill from where our flight departed I entered a fug immediately reminiscent of the short time I once spent in a small room with Lord Harris of High Cross and his pipe. As I waded through to a seat, the smoke cleared briefly and there was Lord Harris, in



In drag: members of Forest donned 1930s gear

trademark deerstalker, chugging on his pipe.

At Biggin Hill it was noticeable that most of the women had fox furs draped around their shoulders and the men were wearing 1930s suits and trilbies. The idea was to hark back to a time of greater freedom. "The 1930s was a

time when society wasn't wrapped up in using the organs of the state to dictate to people how they should live their lives," explained Martin Ball, the non-smoking press officer.

In keeping with this theme the aircraft was also from that age. A 1940s DC-3 was waiting

on the runway. A fire engine was parked alongside.

On board fingers tapped nervously and ears strained for the magic words "you are now free to smoke". We took off noisily, the announcement was made and two dozen lighters clicked on as one.

At 10,000 feet it was freezing and we entered the clouds, both outside and inside the plane.

Large drinks were poured and the delegates luxuriated in their plumes of smoke. The flight was an hour and 40 minutes. The journey takes about an hour on a modern plane. It seems hard to believe that it is not possible to last that long without a cigarette.

"Some people can't," said Ms Nicholson.

"I'm a fugitive from persecution," declared Lord Harris, who is chairman of Forest. "Tolerance on both sides is what is wanted. There is no need for there to be a war."

The conference, which is

DOCTORS CALL FOR BAN

The credibility of the Government's commitment to tackle the health menace of tobacco has been undermined by the debate over sport sponsorship, doctors' leaders said yesterday (Ian Murray writes). Launching an alliance of 80 national organisations that want a comprehensive Europe-wide ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, Sandy Macara, chairman of the British Medical Association, said the de-

bate over the past few weeks on the tobacco sponsorship of sport "has undermined the credibility of the Government's commitment to tackling the tobacco menace and improving public health". A European Directive banning tobacco advertising in sport is to be discussed at the Health Council in Brussels on December 4. Leaders of the alliance are to meet Mr Blair next week.

daughter offered to treat them to a foreign holiday to celebrate their golden wedding, they chose to join the Forest expedition.

"We went to look at holidays but the travel agent said there was no smoking on the flights. Then my daughter heard about this," Maisie said. "So we joined Forest and we came."

George, a former tree surgeon from Hertford, smokes between 40 and 50 cigarettes a day, while Maisie has ten to 25. Both started smoking when they were 14.

I was gasping when we touched down, but for clean air not a cigarette. Forest kindly invited me to stay and fly back with them on Monday but I explained that I had to return earlier and would have to forgo the cosy chimney-interior atmosphere of their DC-3.

Bernard Levin
Weekend, page 7

Lawyer's career in ruins after lie to save lover

By TIM JONES

THE career of a Crown Prosecution Service solicitor is in ruins after an Old Bailey jury yesterday found her guilty of perverting the course of justice.

Penelope Schofield, 35, wept as the jury decided she had lied upon upon lie to protect her policeman lover from a drink-driving charge. Her own defence counsel said her behaviour had been "despicable and indefensible".

Schofield, of Hambledon, Hampshire, now faces being struck off after a disciplinary hearing of the Law Society. She also faces a CPS hearing.

She will be sentenced next month after social inquiry reports when she will again stand in the dock with her one-time boyfriend, Nigel Phillips, a former detective constable, who had pleaded guilty to drink-driving at an earlier hearing. The judge, Sir Lawrence Verney, the Recorder of London, asked for the reports to cover the possibility of community service "without in any way suggesting that will be the outcome".

The woman who helped put Schofield in the Old Bailey dock is Detective Constable Annie Hutchinson. She was dating Mr Phillips, 31, before he set up home with the lawyer. She came forward with new evidence to prove Schofield was a liar, giving



Schofield: told court she had lost everything

police a vital lead in their investigation.

Nicholas Campbell, for the prosecution, told the court: "It may be implied that in some way she was acting out a vendetta against this woman. She had lost her man and she was going to take her revenge by making her suffer."

She had come forward to say that Schofield had taken the taxi alone that night. "She came forward with evidence to assist the police that the couple had lied." But Mr Campbell said, the woman police detective had been acting professionally. Schofield said in a statement read out to the court: "Now I have lost everything—my career, my job with the

Crown Prosecution Service and it is likely that I will be struck off by the Law Society. I have worked extremely hard to get those qualifications and my whole life has revolved around the legal profession. "I am ashamed of what I have done and of the shame it has brought on my family. I did it for Nigel out of stupidity, without thinking of the consequences."

The court was told that Schofield began her deceit after she had accompanied Phillips to a CID dinner dance at the De Vere Harbour Hotel in Southampton last December. As the band played, she thought Phillips was becoming over-familiar with a policewoman; they quarrelled and she left.

Phillips carried on drinking before deciding to drive the 13 miles to the home they shared together. But after four miles — and just a few yards from Bitterne Police Station where he was based — he hit a kerb and punctured one of his tyres.

He drove the car into the station car park and entered the building where colleagues saw he was drunk and he was arrested, breathalysed and found to be three times over the drink-drive limit. In the station, he made several calls to Schofield and persuaded her to agree she had been driving up to the time of the "accident".



WPC Michelle Wilkinson shows off £250,000 worth of jewellery at the Bumblebee roadshow in the Queen's Stand at Epsom racecourse

Burglary victims' £5m flutter pays off

By PAUL WHITTAKER

IT MAY have seemed like an odd-on loser to most, but a small number of burglary victims who attended yesterday's 20th police stolen property roadshow at Epsom Racecourse came away winners. However, the 37 lucky punters who had identified

their stolen valuables by the afternoon may have to wait months to collect, depending on whether they need to be used as evidence in court.

With statistics showing a home in Britain is burgled every two minutes, it was little surprise that record crowds gathered for the biggest yet Operation Bumblebee roadshow.

More than 600 people poured into the Queen's Stand in the first two hours to view the collection, worth more than £5 million.

Stolen goods included a £10,000 horse-drawn carriage, a £25,000 17th-century painting, a jet ski and a 1987 Zeebrugge ferry disaster commemorative medal. One of the day's

winners, May Clark, a district nurse from Southend, Essex, found two heirlooms left to her by her mother which were stolen in 1993.

Mrs Clark, 50, who identified a gold brooch and a heart-shaped locket, said: "It was a real gamble coming here. I was not very hopeful I would ever see these items again."



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Prisoners in a 'human zoo'

Tourists are contributing to Thai slavery, writes Andrew Drummond



Abducted Paduang, left, are held captive as others in a refugee camp, right, await news of them



WOMEN from a remote Burmese hill tribe who are renowned for their long necks are being used as exhibits in a human zoo in Thailand, where they sought refuge after fleeing from Burma's military junta. Three of the villagers, who have been found by *The Times*, are alleged to have died after being deprived of medical attention.

The women, from Kayah state in Burma, went missing a year ago, having been kidnapped by Thai businessmen and placed under armed guard on land controlled by the Thai Army just over the border from Burma near the village of Thaton, on the River Kok.

Tourists, who have been paying £4 a head to view the women, are told by guides that the families are living free under the care of the Thai military, which has given them the land to live on.

But their families say that they have been sold into slavery. They are paid £3 a month per family by a Thai businessman to look their best for tourists. Their captors sell them make-up, which they insist the women wear, and aspirin derivatives if they fall ill.

The discovery of the camp comes as Thailand is promoting long-necked women as a tourist attraction for "Amazing Thailand Year", an international publicity campaign. The women told *The Times* they had been beaten regularly and their husbands had been forced to work for the Thai Army, digging



trenches on the Burma border. Civilian guards near the camp had immediate access to M16 weapons and hand-held mortars.

The captives are members of the Paduang hill tribe, an offshoot of the Karen, an ethnic minority who fought with the British Chindits against the Japanese in the Second World War. Since then, they have been fighting the Burmese military dictatorship for their own state.

The group of Paduang, originally 34 in strength, fled Burma in August last year, leaving their Kayah state village of Panpet in Deemaung township. For ten days, friendly units of the rebel Karen army monitored the group as it followed a well-worn route to the Karen refugee camp of Baan Na Soi. There, other long-necked hill-tribe relatives are being looked after by the Karen Refugee Com-

mittee in the relative safety of another tourist village that they help to administer themselves. It has since been learnt, however, that, only a few miles short of their destination, the fleeing group was put into minibuses with tinted windows and driven out of the area. Karen intelligence sources discovered that the guide — once a Mae Hong Son tourist guide — had sold them, and absconded with the proceeds.

"We sent our troops after him but they got the news six hours too late," said Aung Myat, the deputy chairman of the Karen Refugee Committee in Mae Hong Son.

Three months ago, Karen refugee officials were given the first evidence of the plight of their missing people. They received a tape from a tourist who had visited Paikonghai and been asked to deliver it to the refugee centre.

The tape began with the sound of Paduang women singing a dirge, but then cut to the voice of a woman pleading for help. "Please come now. Things cannot be any worse," she said. "We would rather die than live here." For 30 minutes a succession of men and women poured out their complaints. "We are beaten when they see us writing or trying to talk to tourists secret-

ly," a voice said. Another complained: "They won't let us leave. They guard us with guns." One said: "We don't want to see these people visiting and smiling and laughing at us. We want to be with our own people."

Yet another said: "I feel so sorry when foreigners come and ask about our children's schooling. They won't let us take our children to school. We cannot eat the food they give us. They shout and scream if we do not make the foreigners happy."

Families in the Baan Na Soi camp recognised the voices of their relatives. Zaw Thet, the only Paduang member on the refugee committee and a former rebel officer, travelled north to investi-



An Israeli tourist offers sweets to a Paduang girl, unaware that she is being held captive in the northern Thailand "human zoo"

gate. "When I got there, there were 40 armed men at the gates. They had M16s and machineguns. They pointed their guns at me and refused me entrance," he said.

Despite several attempts by the Karen Refugee Committee to have the families released, the only action taken by the authorities in Chiang Mai province was to arrest the Paduang women and charge them with working illegally. They were then immediately sent back to work in the camp after the businessman, Thana Nakluang, paid their bail. He was also charged with using illegal labour, but the maximum fine he faces is less than the takings from a bus of tourists.

After an appeal from within Kayah state, I visited the camp as a

tourist, accompanied by Zaw Thet and an official appointed to investigate child exploitation.

After paying the entrance fee, I entered the camp with the Thai official and was able discreetly to deliver a message in Burmese and play a tape of Zaw Thet talking to his people in Paduang. The camp village emptied as the Paduang families, at first incredulous, rushed to the gates, apparently believing they were to be freed.

Newly arrived tourists looked into the huts, bemused to find them empty. At the gates the Paduang rushed to touch Zaw Thet. The guards were compelled to let him in so the Paduang would at least return to the tourist viewing area.

The Paduang confirmed the allegations they had made on the tape. A camp manager in dark glasses nicknamed *Muu* — Thai for pig — denied the brutality. "Don't believe they are not happy here and that

we do not pay them. They make lots of money. Look in their huts. We treat them very well," he shouted. "Just ask them." We did. All said they wanted to leave immediately.

The Karen committee and Thai officials had to leave the camp with the arrival of Tourist Police friendly to the owner, and after the scarcely veiled threat of having their pictures taken by Nakluang's camp guards.

Zaw Thet said: "Only public opinion and good Thai citizens can help our people now. The Paduang are not animals, but proud people with fierce traditions. This is a mockery of them."

Andrew Drummond has spent a considerable time on the Thai-Burma border reporting on the ethnic rebels' fight for survival. He has reported on the Karens' 50-year war for BBC's *Everyman*, and on Khun Sa, the opium warlord, for the ITV network.

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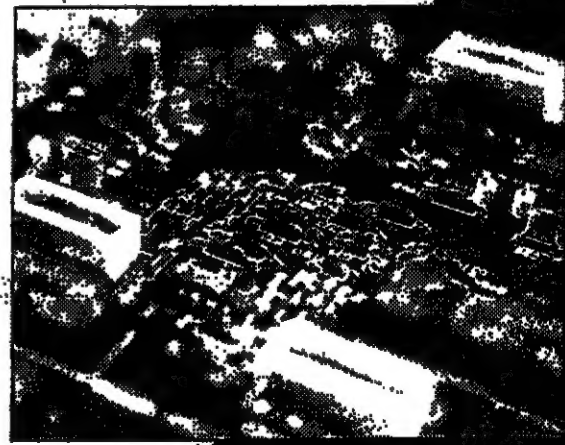
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ERAPY.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF THE QUEEN

Bouquets and smiles: at ease among her people



The Queen at the Royal Gala at the Festival Hall on Wednesday, left, and meeting Chelsea Pensioners on her relaxed and informal walkabout with the Prime Minister on the way to the Banqueting House luncheon on Thursday



The royal walkabout on Thursday dispensed with the usual stock banalities

IF THERE was a defining moment of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh's golden wedding anniversary celebrations on Thursday, it came shortly before noon.

Fresh from the solemnities of thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey, the royal couple emerged from the Great West Door under a leaden November sky and, as planned, headed for the crowd corralled behind crush barriers across the street. It held every promise of a stock royal walkabout, with its standard banalities of "Have you come far?" and "Have you been waiting long?"

Suddenly, someone in the crowd handed the Queen a balloon. It was one of those helium-filled novelties that stays aloft at the end of its

The Hanoverian scowl has disappeared in what appears to be an overnight change of royal style.

Alan Hamilton reports on a rejuvenated monarch

string. The Queen is well used to accepting posies and bouquets from the multitude, which she accepts graciously and immediately passes to the nearest courtier or policewoman, with a polite smile to the donor. But the balloon was different: the Queen hung on to it for the best part of a minute, and for that brief moment she looked more relaxed, more at ease with herself and her world, than she has done for years.

Was this the same scowly, jowly Hanoverian we used to know, the distant lady with the strangled vowels — which she would have called "viles" — that was our hereditary head of state? Was this the same Head of the Commonwealth who used to read duty speeches with head fixed downwards on text, who at the Banqueting House on Thursday looked us — or at the least television camera — square in the eye and told us that she was open to change?

It is indeed the same head of state whose job has been to symbolise the United Kingdom for 45 years, whose first Prime Minister was Winston Churchill and who is now on her tenth. But whatever has happened to the royal body language? Suddenly it speaks to us. Has there been an overnight change of royal style, or are we all so captivated by the new Labour notion

of People's Britain that we see what we want to see? Or has the monarch been got at by the Blair image-massagers?

Probably none of those. A golden wedding anniversary is a cause of celebration for anyone who has endured the same partner for half a century, and who still draws strength, comfort and pleasure

from the union, as the Queen and Prince Philip patiently do. In their respective speeches, he spoke of her tolerance, she of his strength. Public though it may have been, the golden wedding was, for the Queen, essentially a personal occasion. And it was an uncontroversial one: few, whatever their views on the future of hereditary monarchy, were likely to make adverse capital out of half a century of successful marriage. She was on safe ground. She looked a little severe at

Guildhall on Wednesday when her husband paid an elegant tribute to her tolerance. (He, on the other hand, clearly enjoyed her return compliment to him the following day, alluding to the fact that he was a crusty old stick, but no less a rock for that). But at all other times during the week's festivities, we have watched a happy monarch.

This is not entirely new: it is simply that we do not always notice it. What we do vaguely appreciate, however, is that Elizabeth II improves with age. The improvement began when she stopped colouring her hair and bowed to the inevitable of distinguished silver-grey. The improvement was instant, and dramatic.

Being head of state and Head of the Commonwealth requires, when abroad, a certain dignified bearing. But the Queen had never looked so spontaneously happy on any overseas tour within living memory as when she was welcomed by Nelson Mandela to the new post-apartheid South Africa in 1994.

The reasons were threefold. She had a huge personal admiration for Mandela; she is delighted for any country to be readmitted to her beloved Commonwealth; and she recalled her last visit to South Africa with her father in 1947, shortly before her wedding, when she made a memorable

broadcast from Cape Town on her 21st birthday pledging herself to a life of service.

That she has not smiled so much recently is hardly surprising, for serpents and brimstone have rained upon her land in abundance. The divorces of three of her children, the burning of her favourite home and the taxpayer's clear unwillingness to foot the bill, would have been enough by themselves. But then, at the time of the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales, she was criticised for staying at Balmoral, where she was doing her best to comfort her bereaved grandsons.

When she did come back to London, she looked us in the eye in a live broadcast that was, in the circumstances, something of a *tour de force*. The woodenness of her Christmas broadcasts had gone. She gazed straight at the camera (autocues are a wonderful invention, but they do need a little practice) and told us

Continued on page 9

TIME FOR BED

REVEALS HOW A SLEEPY BEASTING WAS DONE

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DAVID BADDIEL

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A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF THE QUEEN



The Duke of Edinburgh showing no signs of crustiness as he meets the people on Thursday's walkabout from Downing Street to the Banqueting House luncheon



The Queen, radiant in red, at the Guildhall lunch



All smiles with her "Happy Anniversary" balloon

Continued from page 8
directly, without any apparent benefit of spin-doctors, that she grieved for Diana, but that she was a grandmother whose first duty was to her family.
The death of the Princess unleashed a weird and frightening tide of emotion in the country. What it did not unleash was a wave of republicanism; the country, in its moment of loss, wanted its mother. It wanted its Queen. Somewhere, in the depths of the nation's atavistic soul, the

monarchy can still satisfy a need. We perceived a new, rejuvenated Queen, 71 years old and blooming, at her golden wedding.
We have heard tabloid hyperbole about charm offensives, new brooms, need to change to survive, and other doubtful invention. The Queen has been fine-tuning the monarchy for years, and although the pace of change may be too slow for some, no one could accuse the institution of being set in aspic. She

pays income tax now. All her relatives are off the Civil List, and the taxpayer now funds only herself, her husband and her mother (to whom we would surely not begrudge a decent pension).
She funded three quarters of the Windsor fire restoration by charging hot-polloi to tramp round her homes. And her household is now run, not by titled courtiers, but by as hard-headed a bunch of City money men as you will find anywhere. She has reluctantly

parted with her boat, and may soon lose her train. She is becoming a slimmed-down monarch, prey to the modern climate of ruthless business efficiency. Anyone who says the Royal Family is a profligate waste of money has not read the balance sheet lately.
But the point about the Queen is that there might be minor changes of style, but her core values do not change. She is under siege from Brussels, which wishes to dilute British sovereignty, and from the

northern half of her kingdom, which if it ever moved to full independence would not automatically choose her or her successor as Held O'Stane.
For the nation state of the United Kingdom as at present constituted, however, she remains the best figurehead we have got, or are likely to have in her lifetime. Her 10th Prime Minister, in his speech at the Banqueting House on Thursday, acknowledged that there were few shrewder cookies about, and that her advice

was always worth listening to. Queen Elizabeth has a husband who adores her, a Prime Minister who is an out-and-out monarchist (although she should be careful that he does not use her for his own political ends), and a public who, now that the fog of recent mass emotion is clearing, still value their monarch. That seems more than enough to smile about.

Leading article and Letters, page 23

Dover - Calais Newhaven - Dieppe

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PETER NICHOLLS

Chris Hession with a sample of Irish seaweed: "This has got everything that people want — it is organic, low in fat, high in vitamins and studies show that it helps longevity"

Seaweed farm caters for rising tide of sushi

FARMERS in the West of Ireland may shortly abandon traditional sheep and cattle husbandry to grow seaweed for sushi bars in Tokyo and London. The first commercial seaweed farm in the British Isles will be set up next month off the Galway coast by farmers and scientists keen to capitalise on the surge in international demand for the slithery weed called "sea vegetables".

Ireland has 560 types of seaweed, of which only dulse has traditionally been eaten. The rest is left to rot or harvested for manure, food additives or soothing hot baths in Kerry and Donegal. Now scientists at the University of Galway, have found among the Irish weeds *Porphyra linearis* and *Alaria esculenta*, otherwise known as *nori* and *wakame*, the most popular seaweeds in sushi bars.

Chris Hession, manager of the



Irish Seaweed Industry Organisation, said that the potential for success in the \$4 billion (£2.3 billion) seaweed market was enormous. In 1994, Japan imported almost half the 223,000 tonnes of seaweed consumed and it is increasingly popular in Europe and the United States.

"This has got everything that people want: it is not an animal fat, it is organic, it is low in fat, high in vitamins and studies show that it helps longevity," said Mr Hession,

For centuries it has been the poor man's food and fertiliser in Ireland, but now it is being grown for an international market worth £2.3 billion, reports Audrey Magee

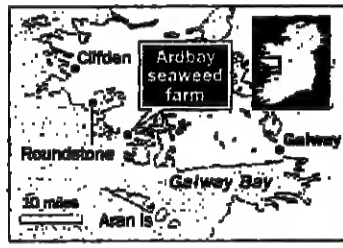
who is based at the university. "All we have to do now is get it right and produce a tasty Irish seaweed."

Production of *wakame*, used in a wide range of Japanese foods, including *miso* soup, starts in Galway next month. For the past three years, the UCG team, funded by the Irish Government and the European Union, have been perfecting the genetic make-up of *wakame*, *nori* and *dulse*. They are already producing *Asparagopsis*

armata, a seaweed used in cosmetics.

The seeds are planted in a bath of seawater, where they wrap around string as they grow. The young plants are transferred to the sea at Ardara, Connemara, and attached to ropes suspended near the surface of the sea, allowing maximum light without desiccation.

The Galway team hopes to produce two crops of *wakame* a year, eventually selling 50g of seaweed at £4 to £20. Next year it



will start farming *dulse*, *Palmaria palmata*, and *nori*, which is used to wrap the rolls of sushi. Most of the seaweed consumed in the world is farmed in China, Japan and other Asian countries. A company in Brittany grows the plant for cosmetic use.

Michael Ward will be the first farmer in Ireland to try growing *wakame*. He is already producing *Asparagopsis armata* for a French company making anti-burn cream. A computer programmer and part-

time farmer originally from Glasgow, he will shortly get young *wakame* plants from the university to plant in his lot in Ardara.

"The Japanese have 5,000 years experience growing this, so that puts them slightly ahead of us, but we are convinced that we can quickly learn and catch up," he said.

However, Hiromitsu Mochizuki, owner of the sushi bar in Harrods, who imports his *wakame* and *nori* from Japan, doubts that the Irish can match the Japanese standards. "Ten years ago I tasted seaweed from Scotland, but it was hard and chewy," he said. "The different seawater and plankton around Scotland and Ireland make the texture much harder. The flavour is more bitter."

"But I am very happy to try it when it is ready. Then we shall see."

NEWS IN BRIEF

New DNA tests in Brittany killer hunt

Gene samples from men aged 35 to 60 are being taken from men in the Brittany village of Pleine Fougères by French police investigating the killing of Caroline Dickinson in July last year.

Caroline, 13, was raped and murdered in a hostel dormitory while on a school trip from Launceston Community College, Cornwall. Last month 169 male villagers aged 15 to 35 gave DNA samples, but all proved negative when compared with the killer's genetic fingerprint.

Boys in court

Three boys of 10 and 11 appeared in court accused of the manslaughter of a woman whose face swept through bedclothes above an offence. They were remanded on bail by Brent Youth Court, North London.

£20,000 award

Lisa De Smet, 28, was awarded £19,800 by Hove County Court after her scalp was chemically burnt while she was having her hair bleached by a hairdresser in Brighton. She had to have five skin grafts and is still scarred.

Tory couple split

The Conservative MP Stephen Day and his wife, Frances, have separated after 15 years. Mr Day, MP for Chesham, blamed the pressure of parliamentary work and both said that nobody else was involved.

Smoker's suicide

Raymond Bateman, 53, a heavy smoker, hanged himself because he thought he had lung cancer, but an inquest in Bristol was told that a post-mortem examination had found no trace of cancer in his body.

Diana inquiry

The BBC has begun an inquiry into how a film about Diana, Princess of Wales was sold as a video of the *Teletubbies*. A shopper in Glasgow was twice sold the film inside a *Here Come The Teletubbies* cover.

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Rich rush to Patagonia in property boom

By GABRIELLA GAMINI, SOUTH AMERICA CORRESPONDENT

THE barren, windswept lowlands and lush green Andean foothills which make up Patagonia have become sought-after property for the rich and famous who are keen to buy huge landholdings in what remains one of the world's most remote and unspoiled regions.

The Patagonia property boom was sparked by the Italian brothers Luciano and Carlo Benetton, who became the biggest landowners in Argentina when, six years ago, they bought more than two million acres in a rugged flatland area of Patagonia that stretches across three southern provinces.

Patagonia refers to a huge area of land occupying the southern cone of South America, south of the Rio Colorado and north of the Straits of Magellan. Most of it belongs to Argentina and encompasses the provinces of Neuquén, Rio Negro, Chubut and Santa Cruz. On the other side of the Andes is a thin slice that belongs to Chile.

The Benettons were the first to move in on a flatland area around the Rio Chubut, shunned by most Argentines as too arid and remote. It is inhabited by small communities of sheep farmers whose forebears settled from Wales

along the rocky Atlantic coastline of Patagonia in the 1860s. The Benetton brothers are said to have invested more than \$100 million (£62 million) in the ranch, where they breed the 270,000 sheep whose wool is exported to jumper factories in Treviso, northern Italy.

The Hungarian-born billionaire, George Soros, owns 96,400 acres just south of the province of Buenos Aires, where he breeds cattle. His estancia — ranch — run by Argentine gauchos, produces grain and milk.

Mr Soros is said to have invested \$160 million in Ar-

gentina, including hotels in the lush side of Patagonia, on the foothills of the Andes around the ski resort of Bariloche.

The region's untouched beauty appears to have been what lured the American CNN media baron, Ted Turner. He and his wife, Jane Fonda, have had a wood and stone mansion built in the Andean foothills, amid the idyllic setting of a nature reserve where deer roam and trout-filled rivers abound.

The 12,000 acres that make up the Trafal estancia, in the province of Neuquén, are valued at \$6.5 million. President Clinton and his wife Hillary visited the Turner property, which is surrounded by evergreen trees and snow-capped mountains, during their visit to Argentina last month.

Sylvester Stallone's love of hunting led him to buy 30,000 acres in San Martín de los Andes near the resort of Bariloche, a forested area dotted with glacial lakes.

Low prices and the huge expanses of uninhabited, unspoiled countryside have been the major attraction. An acre costs between \$40 and \$100. The embracing of free-market policies by Argentina and Chile have also made it easier for foreigners to buy



Patagonia's remote and unspoiled scenery, low prices and development potential are attracting foreign celebrities

land. Previous populist and military regimes had attempted to "modernise" and develop industry in the region, but failed because of its distance from major population centres. The Government of President Menem in Argentina has promoted Patagonia as an environmental protection zone.

In the past, Patagonia was also a stamping ground for

explorers, outlaws, missionaries and Welsh immigrants who sought isolation to preserve their language and culture. Its name derived from the word *pata*, Spanish slang for big foot, which was given by colonisers who on arrival saw large footprints left by a tribe of indigenous people in the region.

These nomads wore animal skins on their feet, giving them

a larger appearance. Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia* also describes some of the eccentric and violent characters who roamed the barren land, such as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

A Peronist party congressman, Mario das Neves, who opposes Patagonia becoming a "park for celebrities", failed last year to prevent non-Argentine nationals from pur-

chasing more land. Roberto Fernández, the director of the rural landowners' society, said: "Rich foreigners are creating employment in these remote rural areas and bringing money into the country. We welcome this."

Chile has been less welcoming. Attempts by foreigners to create a nature reserve and conservation zone have failed, stalled by Congress.

WORLD SUMMARY

2,000 held in foreign prisons

London: Almost 2,000 Britons are in prison abroad, with considerably more than half of them sentenced for drug offences, and last year British embassies were notified of the arrest of some 5,500 Britons (Michael Bihyon writes).

Spain, with 341, holds the largest number of Britons in jail, followed by France with 294, America (241) and Germany (101). The Foreign Office, issuing the figures in its annual report on the consular service, said that British officials made 8,157 visits last year to Britons in prison abroad.

Luxor arrests

Asyut, Egypt: Egyptian police said they had arrested 45 Muslim militants and identified the first of the attackers who killed 62 people in the Luxor tourist massacre this week. They said Abdel Rahman, who had returned to Egypt recently from Sudan and Pakistan, had met accomplices in caves near Badari in the southern province of Asyut before the attack, in which six Britons died. (AFP)

Village shooting

Vienna: A 36-year-old man ran amok with a pistol in the Austrian province of Salzburg, shooting dead six people, including a three-year-old girl. When police caught up with him, he turned the weapon on himself. The dead included the man's neighbours, and the deputy mayor of Mauterndorf, a village south of Salzburg, who tried to mediate in the dispute. (Reuters)

Septuplets well

Des Moines: The largest of the McCaughy septuplets was breathing on his own and was removed from a ventilator yesterday. His six brothers and sisters were making "significant progress", a doctor said. The seven had been on ventilators since birth. The doctor said the others were following a more "typical time frame". (Reuters)

Police cleared

Warsaw: A provincial court acquitted 22 former riot policemen of killing nine miners, the first fatalities of the 1981 communist martial law crackdown against Solidarity. About 100 people in the court in Katowice shouted of "Shame!" when Chief Justice Ewa Krulikowska said the evidence was inadequate to prove guilt. (AP)

Hope for Abiola

Lagos: Moshood Abiola, the detained Nigerian presidential claimant, is on a list of 75 political prisoners who may be freed by military ruler General Sani Abacha, a local newspaper said. It quoted a member of a committee set up by the presidency to scrutinise detainees as saying the final decision would be taken by General Abacha. (Reuters)

No Year's Eve

Jakarta: There will be no public New Year's Eve parties in the holiday island of Bali to avoid clashing with the start of Ramadan, Islam's holy month of fasting. Nearly 90 per cent of Indonesia's more than 200 million people are Muslims, although Bali is predominantly Hindu. Private celebrations, including those in hotels, will be allowed. (AP)

Whites despair over Zimbabwe farm seizures

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

LEADERS of Zimbabwe's commercial farmers completed a series of despairing meetings yesterday to tell their 4,500 members, mostly whites, which farms are to be expropriated by President Mugabe.

Officials of the Commercial Farmers' Union officials have addressed anxious gatherings of farming families around the country this week, reading out from a list of nearly 1,800 farms drawn up by the Government for forced purchase. "There is heartbreak," said a senior official who asked not to be named. "People just sat there stunned. They don't know where tomorrow is any more."

In the most determined campaign against the country's small white community since independence in 1980, the ruling Zanu (PF) party is confiscating 12 million acres of white-owned land, 44 per cent of the total area under commercial cultivation.

Economists say the loss of the nation's most economically vital sector will create major disruption in a country already in political and economic crisis. They see Mr Mugabe as dominated by militant guerrilla veterans of the war against white minority rule in Rhodesia, who are demanding money and farms for helping to bring him to power.

The Government has no money with which to compensate farmers or for resettlement costs. Earlier this month Britain rejected an appeal by Zimbabwe for £150 million.

Peasant farmers in desperate need of land are no longer at the top of the list. Land will be distributed chiefly among former guerrillas. Despite promises of "transparent" consultations in the selection of farms, there has been no contact with the union.

The expropriation has already begun, with government officials this week delivering the first letters notifying owners of their impending loss. The list is being kept a secret until the Government gazettes all 1,772 farms. Farmers have been warned by Kumbira Kangai, the Lands and Agriculture Minister, that they will lose all chance of negotiation if they talk to the press.

Those who attended the meetings said that the list was riddled with mistakes. It made no attempt to adhere to undertakings by the Government to apply a policy of "one man, one farm" and to select underutilised properties or those owned by absentee landlords.

"When we heard the names being read out, it was just ridiculous," said one farmer who asked not to be named. "Some are listed under the wrong owners. Some are in the wrong provinces. Some of the owners have been dead for years."

Afrikaner clan counts lost acres

Harare: The five men of the Erasmus clan sat with the other farmers in Masvingo in southern Zimbabwe and listened silently to the list of farms being read out by an official of the Commercial Farmers' Union (Jan Raath writes).

This close family of Afrikaner stock, farming in Chatsworth, 125 miles south of Harare, for more than 50 years, have lost heavily.

Coert Erasmus Jr, 27, and his father run a highly productive cattle ranch that supplies prime beef to Europe and to the local market. They have been left with a quarter of their 35,000-acre ranch, made up of several small units.

His uncle, Jannie, has lost more than half his ranch. Another uncle, Koos, got off lightly with the loss of a third.

"We will just carry on as if nothing happened," said Coert. "You can't just pack up and run away. We will make it as it comes."

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Murder manual aided multiple killer, say judges

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

IT WAS murder by the book. James Perry meticulously followed the instructions in *Hit Man*, a how-to paperback for would-be contract killers, to carry out three cold-blooded executions.

Perry was quickly caught and is on death row in Maryland. But in an unprecedented twist, the book's publishers, Paladin Press, are being sued for aiding and abetting him.

It is a bitterly fought case that has put America's vaunted freedom of speech and the press on trial. An appeal court has just ruled, in a scathing opinion, that *Hit Man* goes too far.

Paladin's president, Peter Lund, vowed yesterday, during a visit from America to his cottage in the Cotswolds, that he will fight the case all the way to the US Supreme Court. At issue is the right of Paladin Press and its competitors to publish books that give detailed directions on how to commit crimes, not only murder, but building grenade launchers and other lethal weapons at home, robbing banks, cracking safes — even how to dispose of a body.

The spread of these manuals for mayhem is causing alarm. In the first Oklahoma City bombing trial prosecu-

tors said Timothy McVeigh had three Paladin books. One explained how to make explosives with ammonium nitrate, the fertiliser in the bomb that demolished the federal building, killing 168.

After the World Trade Centre bombing, the US Justice Department said the perpetrators had bomb-making information copied "from books published by Paladin Press and others."

Lawrence Horn, an out-of-work sound engineer, hired Perry to kill his ex-wife and quadriplegic son so he could inherit a \$2 million (£1.25

million) trust fund intended for the boy. Perry shot the ex-wife and the son's nurse through the eyes, as instructed by *Hit Man*, and suffocated the son. The prosecution said Perry followed 22 of the book's recommendations in committing the murders.

Yet despite the book's emphasis on making a clean getaway, it was not the perfect crime. Police cracked the case by tracing phone calls from Perry to Horn, who has been sentenced to life without parole. The civil suit seeks damages from Paladin Press for the victims' families.

Some of America's most prestigious newspapers, publishers, broadcasters and journalists organisations filed *amicus* briefs supporting Mr Lund, who contends that a verdict against him would have a far-reaching and chilling effect on press freedom. They included *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the ABC network, owned by Disney.

In their unanimous ruling, the three appeal court judges said it was "breathtaking" to say the least, that national media would feel obliged to defend Paladin's assertion of a constitutional right intentionally to assist murderers with information it knew would be



Horn in a Los Angeles court with his lawyer. He hired Perry to kill his ex-wife and son, and was jailed for life

used in the commission of crimes.

Reversing a lower court decision, the judges said material that directly aids and abets criminal activity cannot enjoy the protection of the Constitution's First Amendment, which says Congress shall pass no laws abridging freedom of speech and the press.

The ruling said the detailed instructions in *Hit Man* stand in sharp contrast to vague rhetorical threats of politically or socially motivated violence that have always been part of impassioned criticism of laws,

policies and government that is indispensable to a free society and rightly protected.

Mr Lund and his lawyers admit the crime was egregious. They express sympathy for the bereaved families. But they ask why their books should be banned while there is no censorship for hundreds of novels, films and television dramas that describe how to commit crimes in detail.

A former Green Beret in Vietnam, Mr Lund stoutly defends his right to publish and be damned. He says the case has already cost him thousands of dollars.



Lund at Paladin's warehouse in Boulder, Colorado

Serb poll to test peace accord

FROM TOM WALKER IN BANJA LUKA

DIPLOMATS and moderate Bosnian Serbs are hoping that parliamentary elections this weekend will finally end the political career of Radovan Karadzic, the wanted war crimes suspect.

The woman backed by the West in her attempt to get the Bosnian Serbs to comply with the Dayton peace accord, Biljana Plavsic, faces the first test of her public standing.

If her political party fails to make substantial gains and a resurgent strain of Serb radicalism makes ground, the West may be faced with the unpalatable fact that the Dayton accord is unworkable — and that Bosnia will fall apart.

More than 1.1 million have registered to vote in the Republika Srpska elections, including about a quarter of a million refugees living outside the entity, many of them Muslims.

None of the mainstream parties contesting the election advocates a unified Bosnia, but moderates who are rallying around Mrs Plavsic's Serb People's Union miffed impatient diplomats with a one-country, two-entities vision.

□ **VICTIMS:** Former Yugoslav warring factions have completed arms reductions agreed last year by destroying nearly 6,600 weapons, said Vigleik Eide, a senior Western army negotiator. (Reuters)

Spain says wider Nato role tied to deal on Rock

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN LUXEMBOURG

SPAIN yesterday accused Britain of trying to use its integration into Nato as a means of forcing it to give ground in its claims to sovereignty over Gibraltar.

Abel Matutes, the Foreign Minister, said Britain was "trying to take Nato as a hostage" after Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, gave a frosty reception to Madrid's latest proposals for settling a squabble over Gibraltar airport.

Britain has made clear that it will not back current moves to bring Spain fully into the integrated military structure of the Atlantic alliance unless Madrid eases longstanding restrictions on the movement

of aircraft and ships in and out of the British territory. "If Spain is going to become a normal member of the alliance, we do not think these restrictions should apply," a British official said.

Rules imposed by Spain two decades ago say no aircraft or ship is allowed to travel between from the Rock to Spanish territory. Aircraft taking off are forced to perform abrupt manoeuvres to avoid infringing Spanish airspace.

Senior Matutes presented the first formal Spanish proposals on the dispute at a one-hour breakfast meeting with Mr Cook before the start of yesterday's EU employment summit in Luxembourg. He suggested stationing Spanish military personnel at the airport, which is on land claimed by Spain, and sharing responsibility for air traffic control in the area.

Britain and the Gibraltar authorities had already signalled that these conditions would be unacceptable. Britain was dismayed that Senior Matutes had decided to present the proposals formally, officials said.

Spanish officials were angry over what they called the "high-handed" tone taken by Mr Cook.

UN team back in Iraq to search for arms

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

HOW far President Saddam Hussein of Iraq may have exploited his confrontation with the United States to conceal documents and equipment related to his suspected weapons of mass destruction will become clearer when United Nations inspectors resume work today.

Between 70 and 80 UN arms experts, including Americans, returned to an icy reception in Iraq yesterday. "Down with America," read banners along their route into Baghdad from an airfield where they arrived from Bahrain. Their first task will be to assess how far their mission may have been set back by the three-week standoff.

America's mistrust of Saddam's intentions was underscored by its continuing military build-up to the Gulf. A second aircraft carrier, the USS *George Washington*, arrived before dawn while two of six F117 stealth fighters, ordered to the region before Russia provided the ladder for Saddam's climbdown, landed in Kuwait.

Iraqi rhetoric suggested there would be further attempts to test the UN's resolve. "Our victory in this battle will lead to several successes whose solid results will appear day after day," said al-Thawra, the newspaper of the ruling Baath Party. "We have proved to everyone that we have a national iron will."

However Iranian officials said the Iraqi leader had played into American hands by providing the US with an excuse to boost its military might in the Gulf, which Tehran regards as its sphere of influence.

Vital weapons inspections had been suspended since October 29 when Iraq banned American monitors and other team members refused to work without them. The six Americans still in Iraq were expelled on November 13 and 68 non-American members were withdrawn the following day in protest. Richard Butler, the UN's chief weapons inspector, said only four Americans would return, explaining the decrease as part of a routine rotation.

During their absence, Iraq was accused of tampering with cameras on a remote-controlled monitoring system at so-called dual use facilities where equipment for civilian purposes could potentially serve military programmes.

There is suspicion Saddam provoked the crisis because the inspectors were on the verge of an important discovery related to his biological warfare programme.

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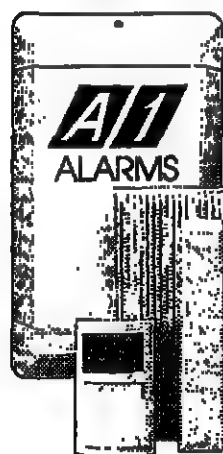
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Jobs summit soured by Spanish opt-out

FROM CHARLES BRENNER
AND ANDREW PIERCE
IN LUXEMBOURG

THE 15 states of the European Union last night embraced a modest package of measures for tackling unemployment after a lacklustre summit that both Tony Blair and French leaders hailed as a victory for their national ideas.

Objections from Spain, which has Europe's highest level unemployment level, soured the closing hours of the Luxembourg gathering and handed ammunition to critics across the Continent, who dismissed the special EU session as a talking shop. Under pressure from Jose Maria Aznar, the Spanish Prime Minister, the other 14 agreed to exempt Madrid from fulfilling deadlines for offering training to the jobless, the scheme's only concrete pledge.

The Luxembourg package commits governments to a "new approach" creating more flexible labour markets, lightening the burden of taxation, promoting business and



offering training. The chief innovation is an accord requiring all states to submit national action plans, to be reviewed by all members once a year, starting at June's summit in Edinburgh. The EU is banking on peer pressure, of the type applied to the

Maastricht monetary criteria, to spur states to comply.

The left-leaning British and French administrations proclaimed the summit a triumph for their contrasting approaches to absorbing unemployment, which has remained at more than 10 per cent of the EU workforce for the past five years. Mr Blair — Britain has half the French unemployment level — said the new measures "signalled fundamental change and a new direction for Europe".

They focused on skills and infrastructure rather than "the old ways of state intervention, corporatism and over-bureaucratic regulation for companies". The summit had "been a substantial success for Europe and the United Kingdom", Mr Blair declared.

However, President Chirac and Lionel Jospin, his Prime Minister, hailed the summit as a triumph for France's drive to have the EU treat employment with the same rigour as monetary union. "Step by step, Europe is taking on a social dimension," said M

Chirac. The French are delighted by Mr Blair's backing for an important role for the "social partners" — employers' organisations and unions — in modernising work patterns.

The French leaders offered some diversion to their EU colleagues when the Gaullist President attacked the employment policy of his Socialist Prime Minister. M Chirac lambasted the "mirage of dangerous experiments that can gravely affect the fight against unemployment". The remark was instantly understood by M Jospin's team to be a swipe at his plan to enact a maximum working week of 35 hours.

The employment guidelines call on states to offer work or training to the under-25 jobless within six months of their being out of work. The older unemployed should be offered a "solution" within 12 months. States, with the exception of Spain, are also supposed to aim to offer training to 20 per cent of all unemployed in five years.

Germans hit back at 'Helmut Dole' jibe

FROM DEBORAH COLCUTT
IN FRANKFURT

DISPLAYING an unfortunate lack of humour, the German Government has lambasted an article in *The Sun* that called the Chancellor "Helmut Dole".

A government spokesman expressed Bonn's disapproval in an official release, resulting in Thursday's story about unemployment receiving disproportionate media attention in Germany.

The equivalent of *The Sun* in Germany, *Bild* newspaper, adopted an unusually high moral tone and blasted the British tabloid for reporting that Helmut Kohl's obsession with shaping up financially for economic and monetary union (EMU) had left his citizens jobless and too poor to afford a pint of beer.

Bild called the *Sun* article, which dubbed Germany a "welfare wonderland" carrying out "state bribery" on a mass scale, as "a wild brew of half-truths". The government spokesman said it was "a concoction of deception".



James Nivette, above, with his son and girlfriend Gina Barnett, who was killed in California. Below, French police arrest Mr Nivette, now held in hospital

French police hold US murder suspect

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A PSYCHOLOGIST suspected of murdering his girlfriend and abandoning their 18-month-old infant by a Californian roadside has been arrested in eastern France in a joint operation by the FBI and French police.

James Nivette, 35, who suffered a suspected heart attack after he was arrested, is expected to fight extradition on the ground that he could face the death penalty if convicted in California.

American police launched an international manhunt for the psychologist after his son Tyler, dressed in pyjamas, was found crying on a pavement near San Francisco airport before dawn on Monday.

A television viewer identified the child and directed police to the couple's house in Sacramento, where they discovered the mother, Gina Barnett, 25. She had been shot eight times with a semi-automatic pistol. An American CBS television crew was on hand when Mr Nivette was arrested on Thursday at an apartment in Munster, on the Franco-German border. Last night he was held in a hospital in the city of Colmar.

The psychologist, whose licence was revoked four years ago for seducing three of his patients, has been charged with murder under an international arrest warrant.

There is no death penalty in France, and French courts seldom agree to extradite suspects who might face execution if sent home for trial. Mr Nivette may be afforded additional protection since, although born in the US, he had a French father.



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Lib Dem win shows Tories' unpopularity, says Ashdown

Conservatives say

Wichester was
feak result
as gamble ends
in rout, writes
Jane Landale

THE Liberal Democrats yesterday celebrated a stunning victory in the rerun general election contest at Winchester as the Tories dismissed their drubbing as a freak result.

On Thursday, Mark Oaten transformed a two-vote majority for the former minister Gerr Malone to a 21,556 triumph. The High Court had ordered that the May 1 poll be repeated after a challenge from Mr Malone.

Paddy Ashdown yesterday joined Mr Oaten for a victory walkout in the Hampshire city and hailed one of the party's greatest successes. Bleary-eyed after the declaration at 3am yesterday, and the champagne party that followed, Liberal Democrat workers turned out in force as passing drivers hooted their congratulations. Mr Ashdown said the result showed the Tories were still as unpopular as ever, while his party's support continued to grow.

Lord Parkinson, the Tory chairman, said the defeat was a "freak result" and that voters had blamed the party for making them go to the polls again. Mr Milne, the former MP, said the defeat was "unfurnished business" after the general election rout. There was a lingering memory of the unpopularity of the last Gov-



Mark Oaten, the victorious Liberal Democrat MP for Winchester, was joined by Paddy Ashdown yesterday

ernment and a lot of that stuck to me," he said. There were suggestions that Mr Malone, who was maintaining a cheerful face, might return to the newspaper industry, before standing for the Scottish parliament. "I have no immediate plans but I am still a political animal," he said.

In six months, the Liberal Democrats transformed a minuscule margin into the largest majority held by any of their 46 MPs. The High Court had declared Mr Owen's two-vote win in May void because of ballot-paper irregularities.

The party secured an almost 20 per cent swing from the Tories: about 8,000 people who had in May voted Tory backed the Liberal Democrats, who were also boosted by concerted tactical voting as some 4,000 Labour voters switched their support to Mr Owen. Liberal Democrats saw this as a good omen for future tactical collaborations. Labour, which had not put much effort into the campaign, lost its deposit, picking up just 0.44 votes.

A Liberal Democrat candidate who gained 640 votes in May won just 59 this time.

The scale of the Tory defeat, which surprised even the Liberal Democrats, can be attributed to Mr Malone's unpopularity; an absence of animosity towards Mr Oaten among Tory voters; Labour voters' willingness to vote tactically; and the continuing unpopularity of the Tory party on a national level.

Some voters felt that Mr Malone had been a bad loser for refusing to accept defeat in May. That the courts ultimately judged that he had technically won then was ignored.

**Leading article and
Letters, page 23**

Muted cheers greet close call

BY NICHOLAS WATT

AS victory parades go it was pretty tame. Jacqui Lait, who had scaped home for the Conservatives in the once-rock-solid Tory seat of Beckenham, ranaged only a brief appearance in her new constituency yesterday.

The former Whip, who had lost Hastings and Rye at the general election, revived her parliamentary career on Thursday night by a narrow margin when she held Beckenham previously represented by Mrs Merchant, with a majority of 1,227 over Labour. The result was an embarrassment for the Tories who have held that seat at every election since it was created in 1948.

Loosely gloomy and exhausted, Mrs Lait greeted unenthusiastic shoppers for little more than ten minutes on Penge High Street yesterday. The new MP was defensive and turned her narrow victory to the weather. It had been "filthy November day, cold, wet and dark", she said. "People thought they would never stay at home."

Tor campaign workers, who had slogged round Beck-enhanduring the three-week campaign, were so downbeat yesterday that Mrs Laird did not appear until just before midday. "I thought it was better that I got some sleep. Otherwise I thought people may not appreciate the sight of me," she said, trying to enliven the scene here.

But there was little to cheer the campaign workers. One soon said she "would rather go



Jacqui Lait

BECKENHAM	
Jacqui Lait (Con)	13,16
Bob Hughes (Lab)	11,93
Rosemary Vetterlein (L/D)	5,68
P Rimmer (Lib)	33
J McAuley (NI)	26
L Mead (New Brit Ref)	23
T Camplin (Soc Found Party)	6
J Small Nat Law Party	4

Con majority	1,22
Total vote 31,908	Turnout 43.7

1997: Piers Merchant (C) 23,08
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 Vetterlein (L/D) 9,858 L Mead (Re
 1,663 P Rimmer (Lib) 720 C Pra
 (UK Ind) 506 J McAuley (NF) 388

home. It is pointless, the atmosphere is so bad."

Mrs Lait, a usually bubbly person, headed for a smarter area, Beckenham High Street, to see if things were better. A few pensioners out shopping greeted her. One said: "I voted for Jacqui and she seems very nice. I think a lot of the old ladies did not bother."

Hague's glimmer of hope fades to gloom

THE Tories are still reeling from their May 1 rout. However much special and unusual circumstances in both Beckenham and Winchester are discounted, the two contests wipe out the mid-summer glimmer of hope of the increased Tory majority at the Uxbridge by-election. The party has not yet drawn a line under its defeat.

After Tony Blair's rough last few weeks, he will be relieved that Labour improved its share of the vote at the Beckenham by-election, from 33 to 37 per cent. The party's wipe-out in Winchester is largely irrelevant, set against the runaway success of Mark Oaten, the re-elected Liberal Democrat. Of course, the near 20 per cent swing from the Tories to the Lib Dems is fantasy politics. But the result gives Paddy Ashdown a powerful answer against internal party critics of his closer co-operation with Mr Blair.

Mr Ashdown's policy of "constructive opposition" has withstood its first key test. Lab-Liberty will be taken a step further in the next

RIDDELL C

fortnight when the commission on electoral reform is finally set up.

But Winchester is unlikely to be the prelude to further Lib Dem by-election victories against the Tories. The problems which Gerry Malone faced on Thursday will not apply in any other Tory-held seat where a vacancy occurs.

Moreover, when, rather than if, the Government runs into mid-term unpopularity, the beneficiary is likely to be the Tories, not the Lib Dems. The old Liberal Party seldom achieved gains when Labour was in power, apart from taking the odd rundown inner-city seat such as Birmingham Ladywood in 1969 and Liverpool Edge Hill in 1979. David Steel was the last Liberal, in March 1965, to capture a Tory-held seat when Labour was in office.

This all depends on the Tories becoming credible. William Hague cannot be blamed for the misfortunes

of Piers Merchant and the unpopularity of Mr Malone. Nonetheless, 40 per cent of those who voted for Mr Malone on May 1 either stayed at home or backed Mr Oaten on Thursday. In Beckenham, where turnout fell sharply, an even higher proportion, 43 per cent, did not back Jaquie Lait, mostly in this case staying at home. Of course, voters do not like what they see as unnecessary by-elections.

But the results show how much the Tories have to do to rebuild public confidence. In this respect, it was slightly bizarre to choose such a day to highlight Tory divisions over Europe. Peter Temple-Morris has been an increasingly semi-detached member of the Tory party and did not complain about the axe descending. Nonetheless, this just shows that the Tories will endure more troubles before recovery starts.

PETER RIDDELL

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Hampstead stuck in legal gridlock

A plan to cut congestion has been delayed by a handful of objectors.

Reports by Dominic Kennedy

As Glenda Jackson prepares to declare war on commuter traffic, a battle is taking place on her own doorstep between champions of the car and campaigners for the environment.

The wide avenues of her constituency, built to accommodate horse-drawn carriages, have become the scenes of such daily chaos that Ben Elton chose Hampstead in North London for the climax of his anti-car novel *Gridlock*, about a giant traffic jam.

One of Elton's characters says: "It is mayhem out there! The minute word goes around that anything above fifteen inches of London kerbstone has become vacant, it is a battle zone, guys! They're all screaming 'Mine, mine' and spitting and snarling and throwing boiled sweets and road atlases at each other. People will kill to park! They will kill themselves to park!"

Ms Jackson, the London Transport Minister, has issued a Green Paper that anticipates the end of free on-street parking, to stop commuters driving to work and dumping their vehicles all day. But two barristers in her constituency have shown how easy it is to sabotage the kind of residents-only zones which the Government now advocates.

Problems began in 1991 when Camden council turned the town centre of Hampstead into a controlled parking zone where residents had to buy annual permits to leave their cars in special bays. Commuters responded by leaving their vehicles in the neighbouring areas of Belsize Park and Primrose Hill.

Camden council intended to extend the residents-only parking zones to these areas too. Not only did this anti-commuter policy fit with the borough's image as the most environmentally conscious in

London, it is also a way of making large amounts of money without putting up taxes. Residents' parking zones create a profit of £6 million a year for Camden, which the council uses to subsidise public transport for the elderly and infirm.

But some car owners resent having to pay to park outside their homes. They argued that residents-only zones would deter friends and relatives from visiting. The housebound would be lonelier than ever. Led by Mark Cran, QC, a barrister who has fought for the singers George Michael and Holly Johnson, ten Primrose Hill residents took Camden to court. Among the objectors was the former Downing Street caterer, Clare Latimer.

They persuaded Mr Justice McCullough in 1995 that, when Camden consulted local people, it had already made up its mind to introduce a zone. Camden had to begin consulting all over again. In summer

1996, the council said it was ready to restrict parking in Belsize Park from January 1997. However, Mr Turner, a barrister from Gospel Oak, argued that the permit charges of £82 a year were excessive. Camden capitulated and paid MORI £20,000 to poll residents across the borough about what would be a fair price. The people seemed to support the current charge.

In September this year, counsel warned Camden that this was not enough: it would have to consult the people of Belsize Park alone on the cost of permits. May 1998 is now the latest target date for zones to come in.

Ms Jackson is facing the frustration of old friends such as the playwright Peter Nichols, one of her election canvassers, who has long campaigned against the cult of the motor car. His 1974 play, *The Freeway*, was about a giant traffic jam.

Instead of completing his umpteenth questionnaire, Mr Nichols told the council: "Don't expect us to waste more time filling your office with waste paper." He says: "Camden has buckled under the personal reaction of one individual in Gospel Oak with crackpot objections."

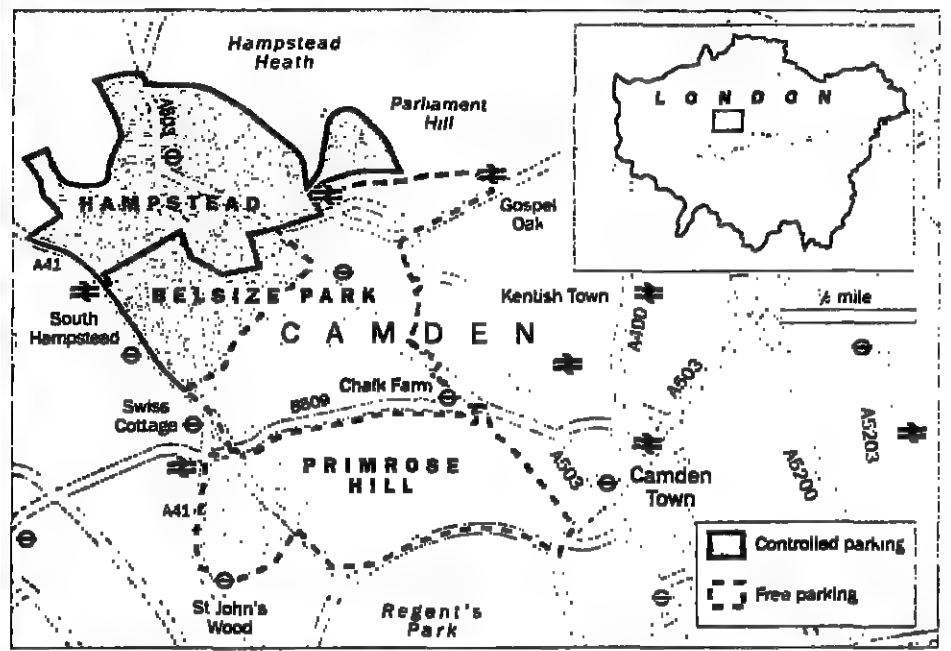
He has nicknamed the area "Belsize Car Park", but when he wrote to Ms Jackson about this, he says, she just thanked him for his letter and enclosed



The playwright Peter Nichols, who has long campaigned against the car, right, parents dropping off children at school are blamed for adding to traffic congestion



Mark Cran, Clare Latimer and Jonathan Turner have fought parking restrictions



Parents dropping off children at school are blamed for adding to traffic congestion

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TACKLING THE SCHOOL RUN

A GIRLS' independent school cut traffic by a quarter by encouraging pupils to walk, get the bus, or travel by car in groups. The Royal School in Hampstead has won praise from the Government's pollution advisers and is about to become a model for schools, colleges, offices and hospitals.

When governors wanted to increase the roll of day girls, Camden council said they could have planning permission for an extra 50 pupils only if the "school run" was cut by 30 per cent in three years.

The bursar, Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Rixon, who had dealt with logistics at the Ministry of Defence, compared the postcodes of all 108 day pupils. He suggested to neighbouring parents that they should share car journeys. Private minibuses were arranged. The bursar also wrote to parents suggesting they used smaller cars.

Within a year, traffic had declined from 148 cars during the peak hour on Friday afternoon to 114, a fall of 23 per cent.

The school is praised in the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's latest report. Its chairman, Sir John Houghton, said yesterday: "It is an excellent idea. A great deal more could be done by sharing trips to businesses, shops and schools."

Camden has decided to use the same methods at a state school. Businesses in the borough are working on similar plans.

Leading article, page 23

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RAF officer's mistress 'would go with anyone'

Murder trial told of 'promiscuous' interpreter, writes Michael Horsnell

THE attractive Serb interpreter for whom an RAF officer allegedly murdered his wife was a "tricky and promiscuous" young woman prepared to prostitute herself with anybody for her advancement, a court was told yesterday.

Within days of being told by Squadron Leader Nicholas Tucker of the death of his wife, in a faked car crash, 21-year-old Dijana Dudokovic decided against joining him in England and began an affair with a Swiss restaurateur in the ski resort of Verbier, Norwich Crown Court heard.

The officer, who had had a five-month affair with her in Bosnia, where he served as a military observer, made daily telephone calls to her before and after the alleged murder, upon his return to Britain in July 1995. And he sent her a five-page letter in which he repeated the words "I love you" — like a "schoolboy's punishment".

But she tore it up without replying and burnt it, the court was told. The end of her affair with the 40-year-old officer was described to the jury by Bertrand du Pasquier, a former Swiss civil servant who served in Bosnia with the UN High Commission, on the fifth day of Mr Tucker's murder trial.

Mr du Pasquier told the court that, after Miss Dudokovic received a call from Squadron Leader Tucker,



Squadron Leader Tucker: he had five-month affair Bertrand du Pasquier, left: he denied relationship



er, she realised it was not possible for her to go in England to join him. "She realised her future would break down and she said, 'Now I am ready to do anything. I am even ready to prostitute myself. I am ready even to go with an old man in Switzerland.'"

He added: "She was tricky." She had a lot of friends in the United Nations Protection Force. "I know that she was a promiscuous woman."

Squadron Leader Tucker denies murdering his wife Carol, 52, on the night of July 21, 1995 by staging a car accident in which his Ford Fiesta plunged into the River Lark in Suffolk. Mrs Tucker was found drowned under a

bridge, but only after her husband had asphyxiated her. It is alleged. The prosecution claims that it was all for the love of Miss Dudokovic, who never saw him again and has subsequently married.

Mr du Pasquier, who later supervised elections in the former Yugoslavia, told the court that, at the request of Miss Dudokovic's father, who worked in his office in the UN's Northern Sector headquarters at Topuska, he obtained a visa for her and paid her air fare to Switzerland. Mr du Pasquier said he returned to Geneva in June 1995 and the following month Miss Dudokovic arrived to stay with him and his children at their home, later spending several days

with them at his chalet in Verbier.

It was at the Swiss resort that she began an affair with Heinz Walder after meeting him at his restaurant, the Al Capone Pizzeria, and moved into his chalet.

Mr du Pasquier, now a consultant with the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, denies that he ever had an affair with Miss Dudokovic. He said that it was for compassionate reasons that he agreed to get her out of Bosnia. Asked why she had moved on from his home, he said: "She was ready to follow anybody."

He said he got "fed up" with the way the "manipulative" young woman used his home as a "sort of Post Office". "As soon as she arrived in Geneva at my home I had arguments with her about her behaviour. I tried to say to her to leave my home. When she finally met Mr Walder and decided to go with him, it was a very good solution for myself."

Miss Dudokovic left after allegedly taking a gold bracelet worth \$3,000 from Mr du Pasquier when he refused to give her money. He said Miss Dudokovic received calls every day from Squadron Leader Tucker during her two weeks in Geneva. These included one on the morning of Mrs Tucker's murder and one two days afterwards, on July 23.

The trial continues.



Dijana Dudokovic was described in court as "tricky and promiscuous"

Death of winchman blamed on ship's SOS delay

By A CORRESPONDENT

THE son of the helicopter winchman who was swept into the sea to his death while rescuing the crew of a cargo vessel forced onto rocks in Shetland said yesterday that they had been "incompetent and unthoughtful".

Alan Deacon, 24, blamed the loss of his father, Bill Deacon, on poor management and incompetence by the captain and crew of the Bahamas-based *Green Lily*. Mr Deacon, a Royal Navy petty officer, alleged that the handling of the emergency was motivated by money.

His accusations were backed by coastguard sources, who said that both the crew of the Bristow helicopter, on contract to Shetland coastguard, and the lifeboatmen were furious over the apparent delay in the skipper's decision to radio a distress call in such terrible conditions.

The dead man's son told a news conference in Aberdeen: "It never matters how stupid or ignorant the people who get themselves into these situations might be — as with the crew of the *Green Lily*, who proved themselves to be completely unthoughtful and incompetent."

"Whatever way you look at it, the lack of leadership skills and good decision-making on behalf of the ship's skipper led to the death of my dad. What that has been driven by is money. Strangely enough, money is something my dad always said is not important and that was never ever his main concern."

"I always replied: 'It's just as well, Dad, because you could never get paid enough for what you do.'"

Ezio Abram, the captain of the wrecked freighter, wept yesterday during a press conference at Lerwick as he said he was "very sorry" that Bill Deacon had lost his life.

Mr Abram then denied that he and his crew had shown poor seamanship during the rescue on Wednesday afternoon. He had held a master's licence since 1984 and had been with this company for a year. He said he had crossed the Atlantic 66 times and was used to sailing in bad weather.

The ship's owners, the Norwegian company Green Chartering, also supported his decision not to abandon the *Green Lily* earlier.

Mr Deacon's body was discovered on Thursday close to the island of Bressay.



Bill Deacon: died while rescuing ship's crew

Raging thirst 'wakes little hibernators'

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

THE mystery of why hibernating animals such as dormice, bats and hedgehogs wake up briefly during the winter may have been solved. Scientists have evidence that, like human beings after a night on the tiles, the animals become ferociously thirsty and rouse themselves from deep slumber for a drink.

Fred Bright, a zoologist at Royal Holloway and Bedford College in Egham, Surrey, said yesterday: "With the dormouse, 70 per cent to 90 per cent of the energy expended during hibernation is expended during these arousals."

One theory is that waste products build up and need to be flushed out. Other theories vary from circadian rhythms — natural cycles of sleeping and waking — to the loss of certain sleep patterns.

But a team at the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec, Canada, and the University of New England in Armidale, New South Wales, believe dehydration is the key. Their findings are published in *Functional Ecology*, a journal of the British Ecological Society.

The researchers have calculated evaporation rates from

little brown bats and golden-mantled ground squirrels over a range of hibernating temperatures. "Our analysis suggests that the phenomenon may be influenced by evaporative water loss, indicating that the animals may need to obtain free water when they arouse," say the scientists.

A study of the burrows of the ground squirrels indicates they are designed to produce water droplets for drinking. Dr Bright said the findings were backed up by research in Britain, where studies of pipistrelle bats indicate a main cause of death during hibernation is dehydration. It is one of the main reasons to rise and lick moisture off a cave wall. "Dormice here almost certainly do the same thing," he said, adding that the nests of hedgehogs may also serve as reservoirs.

Studies show that dormice rouse themselves about every eight days and warm themselves up to "full operating temperature". Dr Bright thinks it may be to keep all the organs in good shape. "It is analogous to turning on the car in winter to get the parts working," he said.

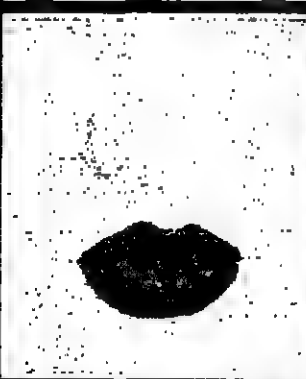
STYLE



RED ALERT

Don't be a scarlet woman, just add a dash of crimson

CULTURE



KISS SEX GOODBYE

It's time to go back in the closet, says Bryan Appleyard

MAGAZINE



THE FULL MONTY MAN
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He just had to get away from it all

Flight is right — but don't bank on paradise, says Simon Barnes

There is no doubt about the hero of the week: Fenn Chapman, the Rugby schoolboy who ran away to Barbados instead of working for his GCSEs. He swapped exams and the English November for a dream of paradise: never mind gerunds and voltmeters, bring a large rum punch straight to my personal palm tree.

Running away is the most glorious of solutions to every problem in life. Running away from something bad; running towards something good — it is hard to separate these primary urges. Both stem from the conviction that a better life not only exists, but has a physical location. Call it the Gauguin syndrome.

Gauguin fled towards Tahiti in search of paradise. He found an island riddled with syphilis and French bureaucracy, but it took more than reality to worry him. Never mind what Gauguin found: what he painted was paradise.

James Joyce ran away, not towards. Anywhere that was not Ireland was paradise. His aim was to fly by the nets of religion and nation. It was a wild and reckless move and he could not do it on his own. He flew with Nora Barnacle.

Joyce's father summed up, accurately, as it turned out, as it stuck to him anyway.

Running away, then, has the highest artistic endorsement. Running away can be regarded as an act of supreme courage. It is, after all, through flight rather than fight that you take wing.

I ran away myself, once. I did not, alas, find myself in a land of brown-skinned ladies wearing nothing but the occasional flower nor did I write Ulysses. I ran away (rather than towards) because being a provincial journalist was so frightfully boring, and I was so frightfully bad at it. But also, I had a romantic yearning for the East.

It was an aspect of the time. Going to India was, in the 1960s, considered the solution to — well, just about everything. Western civilisation was over, man. Seek the truth in India. In Nepal. The truth meant sitting in cafes getting stoned and hepatitis and sometimes religion.

For many that went (and survived), running away may have been a disappointment. But at least it was flight. Chapman knows that better than most. "He needed to get away to find his inner self," a friend told a reporter.

I did not run towards India. I ran away to Hong Kong and a job on the South China Morning Post, from which I was promptly fired. I did not expect paradise, or even naked women. But not expecting, I found nothing disappointing. Four years and a thousand adventures around Asia was, indeed, paradise enough.

Flight is always good. So long as you are running hard, you are ahead of the game. Running towards is dangerous. Seeking paradise is dangerous enough: expecting paradise is almost invariably a disaster.

I read this week of a British couple who went to live in a paradise called Australia. John and Jackie Boyd are to star in a television documentary about the experience. It was ghastly. It seems they found the beer rather cold and the sun rather warm.

There is, of course, no pleasing some people. There are those who, lying on the Caribbean beach like James Bond in *Dr No* and seeing Ursula Andress emerge from the sea clad in white bikini, white belt and knife, would have sent her back on the ground that her belt needed blanching.

Such people believe that if it is happening where I am, then it cannot be paradise. I refuse to belong to any club that will accept me as a member. Which is one way of dealing with life. A miseryguts is seldom disappointed.

But there is a worse way of attacking life. That is to live in one place, utterly convinced that paradise has a physical location — and never going there. Moscow! Moscow! That is the great cry of *The Three Sisters*: "People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy. If I lived in Moscow, I don't think I'd care what the weather was like."

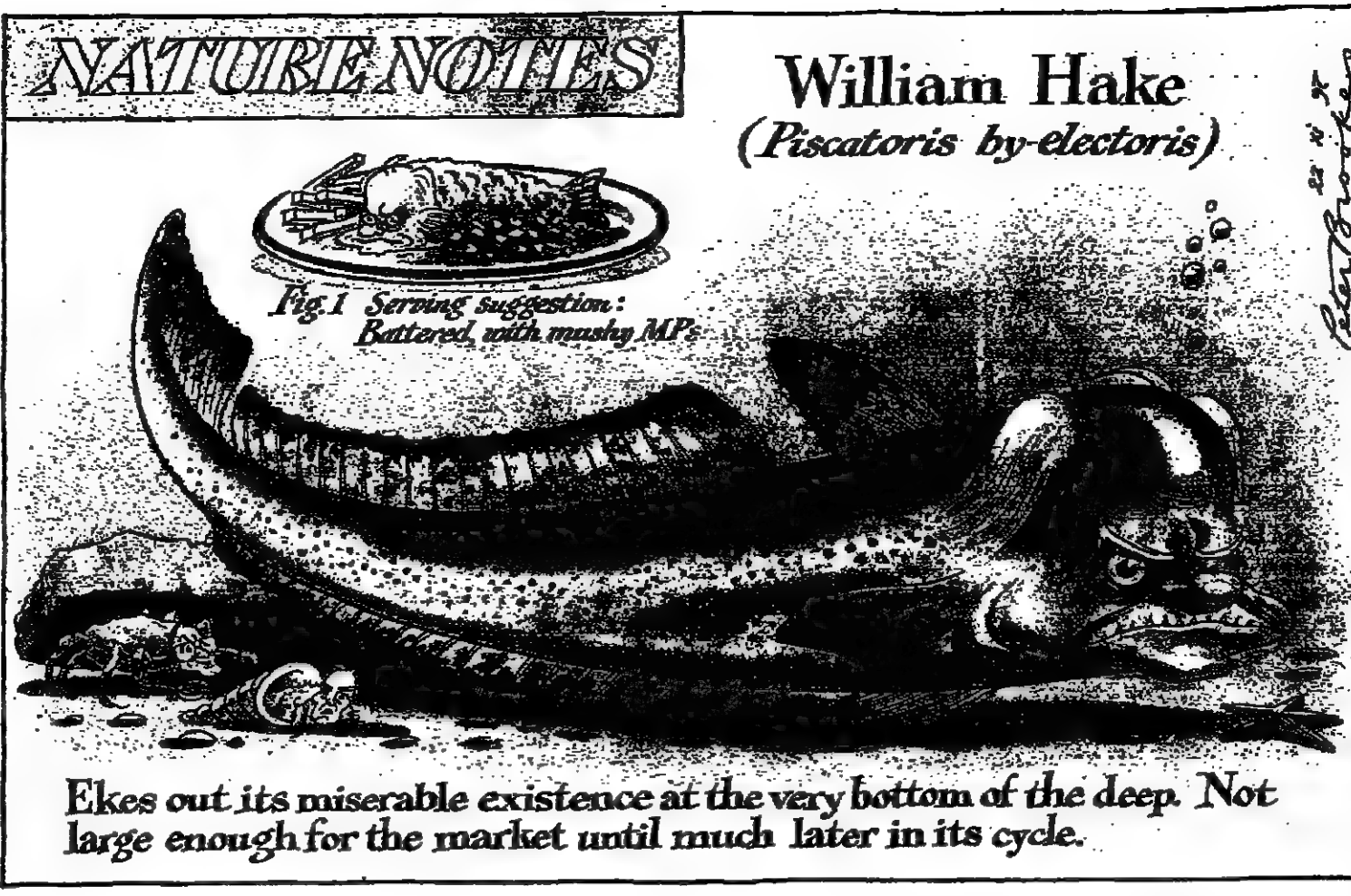
This other-country business can become just a stick with which to wallop your home, your family, your life. Francophilia is a traditional manifestation of this, and is still prevalent. When I find cheese served before the pudding, I reach for my revolver. So right-minded, Descartes, you know, and what's the English for *café*?

Nowadays, America is more often encountered as a receptacle for dreams, for yearnings of paradise. It is also a mighty cudgel with which to belabour England. The glorious classlessness of America is a heady freedom for its occasional English visitors. New York, New York!

Actually, New Yorkers don't rave about the wonderful energy of their home town, still less its heady freedoms. They complain about crime and filth and the prices, and look forward to a visit to a gorgeous, trouble-free paradise such as little old England.

Still, I will give the last word to an American, one Bob Dylan: "The moral of this song is: simply that a man should never be where a man does not belong. And if you see a neighbour carrying/Help him with his load/And don't go mistaking paradise/For that home across the road."

Running away is an act of supreme courage



Monarch of hearts

As the head of a troubled family, the Queen has won herself new affection

Tony Blair is already comparing himself to David in his dealings with the Queen. In preparing for this week's golden wedding celebrations, she told him: "Don't be too effusive." He said: "I don't want to be effusive."

He could not obey this command. He said to her face at Thursday's banquet: "Sorry Ma'am, but I am from the Disraeli school of Prime Ministers." He enthused: "You are so dignified yet down to earth... so unstuffy, unfussy, unfazed by anything, with a keen sense of humour and a mean ability for mimicry... You are the Best of British." The Queen replied in kind. "I believe that there is an air of confidence in this country of ours just now," she said. Britain was a glad, confident land.

This is a high-octane affair. New Labour, New Empress of India. My own contact with the monarch this week was more prosaic. She stopped me crossing Storey's Gate by "going walkabout" on her way from the Abbey. She looked fresh and relaxed, and smiled quizzically at a small crowd of tourists. She was on her way to what the spin-doctors dubbed "the people's banquet", at which she skilfully yielded to her critics without seeming to do so. Thus does a wise Sovereign nudge another sandbag on to the anti-republican dyke.

How different it all seems from just three months ago. Of all the drive regularly written about the British monarchy, none is as rivalling as greets a royal crisis. The monarchy cannot survive this shock: the media screams at each divorce. "This is the end of the monarchy," proclaims each revelation of adultery. "Another nail in the coffin of the monarchy," was trumpeted at the death of Diana. On each occasion, "the monarchy is in crisis... under threat... can never be the same again."

This week was the antidote. As Diana's funeral was a well-crafted mix of collective and personal grief, so the golden wedding was a mix of marital celebration and constitutional renewal. The inclusion of "ordinary" people at the banquet contrived to be more than a gimmick. The Queen's speech, though drenched in spin, was a masterpiece. It identified monarchy with democracy, both requiring "the support and consent of the people", albeit in different guises.

The monarch duly promised to hear the people's message, to penetrate the obscuring veil of "deference and rhetoric" that she is (intriguingly) aware surrounds her office. The family, rich, aloof and portrayed as incomparably happy. It was a cardboard cutout, resembling all happy families — at best tedious, at worst implausible.

When the Royal Family hit trouble it became, after Tolstoy, "unhappy in its own way". It became a matter of inevitable and prurient public interest, but it also became real. It duly incurred not the distancing emotion of envy but the bonding emotion of sympathy. The wave of support that engulfed the Queen in her *annus horribilis* of 1992 returned when her vulnerability was on show after Diana's funeral this summer. Here was a family with problems, making mistakes and sometimes making amends. Thanks to the media, its heart was perpetually worn on its sleeve.

I do not understand the mystique of hereditary monarchy. Such intangible concepts are vulnerable to any puff of political ill-wind. What matters to a nation is a chosen head of state who can enjoy the lasting respect of the public. The Queen enjoys that respect. She might have enjoyed it had the Royal Family displayed three decades of unalloyed happiness. She might have enjoyed it had any troubles been concealed behind a veil of pretence. Wealth, palaces and ceremony can hold a monarch aloof from public gaze for a time. These conditions have not applied.

Instead the Queen has come to appeal for a different respect, a more valid one. It is the respect that comes from acknowledging that affairs of the heart rarely go according to the book, in marriages or in families. Even the best-regulated families come unstuck and there seem no rules to guide them through the trouble. The Queen's experience of family life has made her seem more human, and more worthy of respect, than anything in her reign so far.

The Duke of Edinburgh may have sounded defensive when he declared his pride in his children, when he said that they "had done rather well under very demanding circumstances". Millions of bruised parents knew what he meant. His family has been unhappy in its own peculiar way. Yet there it is, wars and all. I believe this experience has brought the House of Windsor closer to the heart of the nation than any golden wedding homily.

Simon Jenkins

Jammed in a gridlock

Why must my park be a car park? asks Peter Nichols

When I was young, ours was the only car in our avenue. Not for long, though. My father thought this looked like showing off and put his Morris Cowley in the garage before too many neighbours spotted it.

This was still the case until the 1950s. And even then no one sensed the danger ahead. There seemed no reason to remind drivers that streets weren't garages but thoroughfares. Every city in the advanced world has made the same mistake. China is said to graduate from the bicycle and share our problem of finding room for several hundred million cars.

The broad avenues of London's Belsize Park, where I live, must have been in their day an efficient, elegant means of serving the large villas. Now every street is a day-and-night double row of vehicles and the gaps between them narrow with every advance in power steering. It is already no easy task for a pedestrian to leave the pavement. When lateral-steering becomes standard, any small opening that remains will be finally closed. Even bus stops become parking places and buses have to bar the road while their passengers squeeze on and off.

But where to put all the cars? This question has defeated the Western world. A different view must be heard and heeded before our cities are stifled by steel, glass and rubber; by the noise of radios and horns; the wailing and whooping of alarms; the squeal and moan of cars and abuse from driven drivers who, like Gadarene swine, rush into and out of city centres that are no larger than market towns.

The car itself is not the culprit, any more than is the gun which goes off unaided. But both devices bring out the worst in people. We and our metropolises cannot cope. No city built for the carriage can give the car free rein. To earn the privilege of living in the city centres, sacrifices must be made. One can get about without private wheels. Of course, all bus, train and Tube services should be better — and free. If it can be done for the old and very young, why not for everyone? Taxis are also part of the public system. They are cars which are not garaged on the streets for most of the time. Their hire should be cheapened available, not run for high profit by wandering cabs.

Partly-concealed scarcely mentioned traffic, nor ever will, as a proper solution would take longer than any government expects to last. And while MPs have special parking facilities, no change would ever be on the agenda. The quickest way to get proper public transport is to take away parliamentary parking. But who would have to vote for that? MPs are not noted for altruism.

Yet in better moments their fore-runners outlawed slavery and abolished hanging. The smokeless zone is a fact. Fish are returning to the Thames. I don't despair. Limited parking will come — indeed has come north and south of Belsize Car Park. The streets will be reclaimed and cleaned for the first time in decades. The flat-earthers may postpone it, so as to avoid paying for the privilege of throttling the public streets with their private hobbies, but just as traders are converted to pedestrian streets when they count their takings, so the majority will one day become car-free. Only then will they finally realise that what they had before was an auto da fé.

The author is a playwright who lives in Belsize Park.

Salsa sauce

DO NOT be alarmed if you catch a former Tory MP swaying rhythmically to a seductive Latin beat in the capital shortly: Phillip Oppenheim, the former Treasury Minister, rich kid and heart-throb, is to set up a Cuban restaurant and cocktail bar. The truncation of his political career in May has allowed him to realise his long-cherished dream of becoming a restaurateur. His inspiration? A fascination with Fidel Castro, Cuba's communist dictator. Waterloo has been deemed the hippest locale for Cubana, which should pour its first daiquiri early next year.

"I've spent a long time in communist countries and have a keen interest," he said before jetting off to Cuba on a "fact-finding" mission. The man once tipped for the Tory leadership promises that Cubana's decor will boast a "strong communist influence". So will the walls be draped with images of Castro? That would be too tacky even for a former Tory minister. Nor do I want to become a launchpad for a new Bay of Pigs. A



Oppenheim and Castro



Simply magnificent proportions!

● THE MONARCHY retains little mystique for Frances Richards, suppliers of the six coaches used to bus royals around: "We put them in our standard buses. We didn't think they'd need loos or on-board service." The royal households were colour-coded. "We put the British in a purple bus and gave them Trevor Hopkins as a driver. Now Trevor has taken tour groups to Edinburgh, so he didn't need training. We gave him a map and told him to get on with it."

Fizz on hold

AFTER a gloomy sojourn in a Lancashire jail, the tycoon Owen Oyston could soon be dancing on the tables at Springfellow's.

He has served 18 months of a six-year sentence for rape and indecent assault, and his case comes to the Court of Appeal on Monday. Oyston's supporters are confident that fresh evidence will lead to their man's release. "There could be quite a celebration," says one rather mischievous friend. "The champagne and dancing girls are on their way." Oyston has more material concerns. "He can't wait to see what the people running his affairs have been doing in his absence."

● NEVER has an unlaughed at such offence. Lembit Opik, the Estonian Liberal MP, is cross because Hansard fails to use two dots to decorate his surname. "I showed them how to do it," says Opik, believed to be the first unlaughed MP. "I had to point out the key on their typewriters." Hansard has now conceded. "We don't usually do things like this," says a keyboard operative there, "but he kept banging on about it."

● WE were too strict in *Diary Towers* when we ticked off Lord Searman for slipping away early from a debate. Lady Searman was ill and Lord S wanted to be by her side, naturally. If I had known, I would have directed my fire at less dedicated statesmen. Sorry.

Fear factor

TEARS for Gerry Malone fell from normally dry eyes — belonging to hacks on *The Scotsman*. They fear that the failed, but tough, Tory will be offered the newspaper's editorship by his former flatmate and fellow Scot Andrew Neil, top dog there. Malone worked for Neil during his reign at *The Sunday Times*. Says one: "If he comes up here, I'm moving to Winchester."

NEW TIMES

The City has fallen to new Labour. Former advisers to Labour ministers, now making money there, have set up a dining club to celebrate their success. Fifteen members will dine at Landmark, where the glow of honour will be a "senior figure from No 10."

KEEPING CHERIE COMPANY: Peter O'Toole

PARTY TIME

THE affections of Cherie Blair have been won by that celebrated old liverspot, Peter O'Toole. Tuesday night found them both in Leicester Square at the premiere of *Fairytale — the True Story*, a gushing flick in which the ailing O'Toole took a supporting role.

"They got on so well at the drinks party before the screening," purrs a fellow seat-filler. "Cherie seemed rather impressed." So impressed, according to one suggestion, that she later accompanied the actor to the fashionable watering-hole



Soho House. Curiously, the stuffed shirts in the film's production office seemed keen to dispel the rumours. "She had her children with her and took them off after the show."

Meanwhile the Arts Minister, Mark Fisher, has been making himself rather unpopular at the theatre. Last week found him reclining in smart seats, appraising *Shared Experience*. There was a small hitch. He had not booked them. Enter Simon Gammell, a reliable cog in the British Council, who promptly told him to take his ministerial frame elsewhere.

Owen Oyston and showgirl



NEW MONARCHY

A good week for the Queen, her Prime Minister and the Crown

Rarely in recent years has the Queen looked as relaxed, as happy or as friendly as during this past week. Her mood cannot be put down simply to anniversary delight or the pleasure of seeing Windsor Castle restored. Having downgraded her golden wedding celebrations for fear of public disapproval, she instead found a warmth of feeling which stretched from the well-wishers lining Whitehall to the hardened and sceptical press.

Why has the mood changed so dramatically in just 12 weeks since Princess Diana's death? The answer is that a vicious circle has turned virtuous. Before, the Queen's remoteness and formality aroused public hostility, which in turn must have reinforced her grim demeanour. But since her live broadcast to the nation the day before Diana's funeral, when she let the mask slip a little and acknowledged the need for the monarchy to learn lessons, the Queen has found that a little humanity reaps rich rewards.

Watching her in Whitehall with a helium balloon emblazoned "Happy Anniversary", only the coldest-hearted could have failed to smile. The new informality has not dented her dignity, as her advisers might have feared. Rather it has set in motion what a psychologist would call positive reinforcement: the more relaxed and friendly she appears, the more warmly the public responds, and that can only have the effect of making her happier still.

One of the architects of this new style is Tony Blair. A man who in younger days might have been indifferent to the monarchy has come to appreciate its merits. His speech at Thursday's "people's banquet" was sincere in its praise. The language of his body as well as his words themselves spoke of a relationship that is warm on both sides.

No Prime Minister would want to see the

monarchy collapse on his watch. Nor would most Prime Ministers be happy with the alternative, an elected President who might be tempted to meddle in politics. But we trust that Mr Blair is acting not out of expediency alone. Through his weekly audiences, his dealings with the Queen after Diana died, and the deepening of his appreciation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government summit, he seems genuinely to hold the Queen in high regard.

The man with a well-developed sense of the need for popular support has much to offer a monarch who is insulated from democracy by virtue of her position. She needs his advice. For, as the Queen acknowledged on Thursday, while the monarchy may not be tested regularly at the ballot box, it will cease to exist if the people decide that it has outlived its usefulness. No less than Mr Blair must she be responsive to public opinion, albeit in a measured way.

The hand of Labour could clearly be discerned in the seating plan of the banquet. The Queen shared her top table not with aristocrats and ambassadors, but with a community policeman, a 25-year-old Guide leader and an assembly line worker at Nissan. Such placement serves two purposes: it looks good and it helps to keep the monarch close to popular concerns.

The reason that the monarchy has survived is that it has learnt to adapt with the times. Today's monarch, who had seemed to be stuck in the rigid 1950s, is only continuing the modernising tradition. She is also following her forebears in acting on the advice of her Prime Minister. At this rate, Mr Blair might do for Elizabeth what Disraeli did for Victoria: to coax the monarch back to public affection and entrench this great institution for another reign.

OLD FACES

By-elections show the Tories must break from their past

Thursday was, as Michael Portillo once put it, "a truly terrible night for the Conservatives". Mr Portillo's words, uttered on the evening of May 1, remain apposite despite the peculiar circumstances of the Winchester and Beckenham results. Both were, in their different ways, postscripts to the general election rather than new chapters in British politics.

The circumstances of Mrs Merchant's resignation in Beckenham were a coda to the comic opera of sleaze which ran throughout the Tories' election campaign. Gerry Malone's forlorn attempt to win back Winchester was seen as sour grapes by his former constituents whose muted May Warwick was transformed into a fortissimo "good riddance". Taken together they underline the disdain which the Conservatives earned during their final years in office and emphasise painfully the formidable task William Hague faces in overcoming his party's past record.

Coming after the Government's most uncomfortable fortnight in office, when the Prime Minister's laurels began for the first time to look bedraggled, the scale of the Tory reverse was all the more striking. In Beckenham the Tories had, in Jacqui Lait, a personable and talented candidate whose presence will bolster the tiny contingent of able women on their benches. But she still saw her majority whittled almost to nothing. Her Labour opponent joins an elite band of government candidates in by-elections who saw their vote rise. Ms Lait undoubtedly suffered at the hands of voters irritated by the deceptions of her predecessor and further irked by having to turn out again so soon after the general election as a consequence of his folly.

The annoyance of the Beckenham elec-

torate was, however, dwarfed by the anger of Winchester voters who were clearly piqued at having to remind Mr Malone that a majority of them had sent his Government packing in May. Both Mr Malone and Ms Lait may have suffered particularly as members of the Major Government that was so decisively rejected in the spring. The contrast with the earlier Uxbridge by-election, where a new, local candidate, unsullied by office, succeeded in increasing the Tory majority, will not be lost on the Conservative leadership. If Mr Hague is forced to field the same old faces, he may expect from the electorate the same old cry.

The Tory leadership should take Thursday's results not as a rejection of their programme of reform but rather as an encouragement to be more radical. The memories of an unhappy period in office can be effaced only by a comprehensive renewal of policy and personalities. For that reason, the withdrawal of the whip from Peter Temple-Morris is not only understandable but welcome. After the pointless equivocation of the Major years, Mr Hague should take the shortest way with dissenters. Mr Temple-Morris has been hawking what passes for his conscience around the television studios for too long. His flirtation with Labour was ended only because he believed he could better sabotage Mr Hague by staying inside the tent. Mr Hague paid that judgment the only possible compliment by kicking him out.

There is much more for the Tory leader to do: in democratising his party, being more open about funding, more modern in his presentation and closer to public sentiment in his policy. Winchester and Beckenham are melancholy warnings of the dangers of sticking to the past.

THE SCHOOL RUN

Glimmers of hope for mornings without pollution and stress

One of the surprises of old newsreel films is the sight of thousands of schoolchildren walking to school each morning. The camera rarely lingers on them: there was nothing unusual in youngsters, not yet in their teens, whistling down urban streets largely free of traffic. How different would be such a film today. There would be few children on the streets, and fewer still walking unaccompanied below the age of 11. Virtually no pupils would be found on bicycles. And around the gates of each school there would be a vast traffic jam of crawling, honking cars, pushing aggressively into the brief space by the kerb to let out one, or at most two, children. The road behind them would be blocked. As every commuter knows, daily life in the suburbs begins with road rage and delay.

For some schools, the morning jams have become a factor so limiting that they cannot increase their intake. Two things in particular have exacerbated the problem. The first is the expansion, under Conservative Governments and now also under Labour, of parental choice. The second is the perception that walking to school is no longer safe.

With schools competing for the best pupils, parents are encouraged to select those that offer the best above those that are nearest — even if this means a daily trek across town. There may, or may not, be a bus route; increasingly, pupils are expected to make their own way to school, relying on private transport. Schools appear indifferent to the problems of parking, traffic control and pollution. But what they, and parents,

now believe is that walking to school, even if possible, is unwise. Intense focus on the rare instances of children molested or abducted suggests that predators await on every corner — though Home Office statistics show such crimes are no more common now than they were a generation ago. Undeniably, however, traffic is now so heavy, polluting and fast that the risk of accidents is greater than ever before.

Some years ago the Government inaugurated a Safe Routes to School campaign, encouraging local councils to police and clear the paths, pavements and crossings used by children. This has had a limited success; but it applies only at limited hours. Those remaining at school for hobbies or sports must still rely on parental transport. And increasingly, individual freedom is limited by lack of mobility. Young people are isolated at home, safe but lonely.

Both the Policy Studies Institute and the Audit Commission have highlighted the problem. Encouragingly, parents and some schools are now volunteering time and money to cut the morning crush. Chartering minibuses, policing footpaths, creating temporary one-way systems and abandoning four-wheel-drive vehicles for smaller cars, they are cutting pollution, congestion and inconvenience.

Private schools are the pioneers — not always with the help of councils that look on richer pupils with a jaundiced eye. But state schools too must tackle the traffic. Safety at school is paramount. But so is getting there safely, healthily and on time.

Britain's 'onerous' EMU obligations

From Mr Rodney E. B. Atkinson

Sir, In your issue of November 17 Charles Bremner reported from Brussels that German and French politicians are resisting British membership of the inner "Euro council" on the grounds that, as a Dutch official said, "If you want to be at the table, join the euro club".

This might be a fair proposition if those countries which do not adopt the euro were released from all its concomitant obligations.

However those who do not join (called "pre-ins") are obliged to submit to the rule of the Council of Ministers, while the European central bank is able to issue regulations "binding in their entirety and directly applicable to all member states".

Under the Maastricht treaty those countries which do not join must "transfer foreign reserve assets and contribute to reserves on the same basis as the national bank of a member state" which has adopted the euro. Furthermore, non-joining countries must co-ordinate economic policy with the Council of Ministers and "further the objectives of the Community". With such detailed and onerous obligations on those EU members outside the euro club it is extraordinary that anyone could suggest that they had not justified their place "at the table" of the euro governing council.

Yours etc,
RODNEY E. B. ATKINSON,
Alderley, Meadowfield Road,
Stockfield, Northumberland,
November 18.

From Mrs Gillian Bardin

Sir, There really are "none so blind as those who won't see". On November 19, as the EU 15 gathered for their jobs summit in Luxembourg (reports, November 20 and 21), figures were released on French TV which show that not only unemployment but also poverty has increased in Europe since 1995.

To rigid and archaic social and fiscal structures have been added dangerous deflationary tendencies caused by straining after the convergence criteria.

There is no attempt to hide the damning figures. But so great is the belief that EMU is the cure rather than the cause that few seem to question these ominous facts, to which must be added the rider that EMU needs not only to be attained but sustained.

Yours sincerely,
GILLIAN BARDIN,
(President, British Conservative Association in France),
21 Rue Saint-Honore,
78000 Versailles,
November 21.

From Mr Richard Heller

Sir, The Prime Minister offered a vision in your columns today (article, "My plans to clean up party politics") of a "completely new world of electoral finance". However, he was silent about the funding of the coming referendum on European economic and monetary union and the extinction of the pound.

In the 1975 referendum on EEC membership the Yes campaign outspent the No campaign by a factor of 11 to 1, without counting the official government propaganda in support of a Yes vote.

Sir Patrick Neill's committee should consider whether it would be right to allow this imbalance to be repeated in the EMU referendum. Like its predecessor, its result will be more important than that of any general election — and a Yes vote would be irreversible. The Prime Minister, and Sir Patrick, should recognise that there is an even greater need for fairness and openness in referendum campaign spending than in election finance.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD HELLER,
Oval Publishing,
30 Cressdon Road, SW9,
November 17.

Reluctant peer

From Mr Denis Watkins

Sir, Roy Hattersley (report, November 18), who wants the House of Lords abolished, said that it would take him a "great effort of will" to discuss style and titles with somebody called Garter King of Arms and that "I just cannot imagine myself dressed in ermine robes". Despite this he has participated in arrangements to be gazetted as Lord Hattersley of Sparkbrook. This kind of behaviour is usually described as having your cake and eating it, although many may see it as good, old-fashioned humbug.

Yours faithfully,
DENIS WATKINS,
Ty Newydd, Velindre,
Crymch, Pembrokehire,
November 18.

Blood on the Nile

From Mr N. G. Guntton

Sir, I disagree strongly with your leading article today on the massacre at Luxor. Terrorism does not "feed on frustration and repression"; it feeds on apology and weakness of response.

Yours faithfully,
N. G. GUNTTON,
65 Bolton Avenue,
Richmond, North Yorkshire,
November 18.

League tables of the best and the rest

From the Headmaster of Stowe School

Sir, Our school is at the "wrong end" of the exam result league tables (supplement and leading article, November 18) precisely because it aims to provide the best education for bright children. In a modern democratic society the only schools that can claim to be serving our children properly are those that can show, by example, the best of them how to value the rest of them; but for a school to include "the rest" is a recipe for its exclusion from the top division.

Streaming within a school can work well: two boys in different maths sets can stay in the same house, the same rugby team, the same debating society. But streaming between schools divorces them completely and forever. They will grow up in ignorance of each other: neither is well served by this.

Here at Stowe, Tom and Ed were a good partnership. Tom was headed for four good A-level grades in things mathematical; he was efficient and intelligent and invented administrative systems that worked. Ed inspired warmth, was good at rugby, knew the first name of everyone in the school, could persuade people to give Tom's systems a try, and was hoping by some miracle and very hard work, to be able to pull off a couple of A-level pass grades.

They recognised each other's strengths, and learned to complement each other to get things done. They learned important lessons by being and working together, if not in the same sets or subjects.

Will the Toms keep coming to a school whose exam rankings have been so badly damaged by the Eds? Where else except at school will they learn each other's worth?

Believing passionately that the best and the rest should be educated together, we can live with a poor placing in the league tables: it hurts, but it is the price we must pay to do what we believe. However, unless it is properly understood why we are where we are, the parents of bright children will be wrongly deterred from sending them to us. Then, no matter what price we pay, we will be prevented from doing what we

Early retirement

From the National Officer of Unison

Sir, The picture you paint of early retirement in local government (reports and leading article, November 13) is deeply offensive to council workers forced out of their jobs through redundancy.

The endless cuts and reorganisations in local government have meant that councils have asked for "volunteers" for early retirement. Far from "allowing workers to retire early" many have reluctantly accepted this option feeling that they had a gun at their heads — either go voluntarily or be sacked with a much worse pay off. The fact is that local government workers have paid into their pension schemes for many years to provide for their retirement and are entitled to a decent pension.

The scandal is that in 1989 the Gov-

ernment told councils to cut their contributions to pension funds in an effort to keep poll-tax levels down. Allowing councils to divert money away from pension funds exacerbated the pensions crisis we see today.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH SONNET
(Head of local government),
Unison,
1 Mabledon Place, WC1,
November 13.

From the Chair of the Local Government Association

Sir, Your suggestion that the £5.7 billion cost to local authorities of early retirement over five years could be used to improve schools and roads, is misleading. The money is not available for spending on capital investment.

It is unreasonable to imply that local authorities choose to retire people early on dubious redundancy

grounds rather than invest in services which everyone agrees are grossly underfunded. The fact is that early retirement has been used as one way of cutting expenditure in order to prevent deeper cuts to direct services. The genuine savings on long-term staffing costs have typically been recycled into new jobs, mostly in education and social services.

The Audit Commission acknowledges that many local authorities are already following the recommendations made in its report. Local government itself urged a more rigorous approach six months ago, following advice from the United Kingdom Steering Committee on local government pensions.

Yours sincerely,
JEREMY BEECHAM, Chair,
Local Government Association,
26 Chapter Street, SW1,
November 13.

From Mrs Gill Suddaby

Sir, Surely an A-level pass, whatever the grade, is more important to a young person for the rest of his or her life than the position of a school in a league table.

A local state-funded secondary school has recently adopted the policy of weeding out those students predicted as D or E grades nine months before the exam to safeguard their league position and, thus, funding.

Who pays the price for league tables? Who are we educating our young people for?

Yours faithfully,
GILL SUDDABY,
Stockhold Green Farm House,
Thurston, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk,
November 18.

Winchester result

From Mr Ian Bowater

Sir, Your report today (later editions) on the Winchester result conveyed some surprise that, despite the Formula One campaign-funding scandal, Labour's honeymoon continues. Why?

After a year of tedious congressional committees here, the only thing certain about fundraising scandals is that they do not play well with the public. Even the far less sophisticated American electorate knows that they are all at it.

Yours etc,
IAN BOWATER,
3171 Barry Avenue,
San Diego, California 90066,
ssims@ucla.edu
November 21.

Rude, but not very

From Mr Stuart Kershaw

Sir, Maureen Lipman is upset at Vicor Lewis-Smith (Diary, November 19) because he called Vanessa Feltz a "Yenta". Maureen need not worry.

My uncle, a Yiddishophone of great sensitivity, habitually refers to his beloved wife, after 50 years plus of happy marriage, as the Yenta. It means "her indoors". Gossipy possibly. Cunning never.

Yours faithfully,
STUART KERSHAW,
9 Tretawn Park,
Mill Hill, NW7,
kershaw@winkworth_hendon.demon.co.uk
November 19.

From Mrs Pamela Morgan

Sir, As a disillusioned Tory, I suggest that the Conservative Party changes its candidate for Winchester and its party leader; then it might stand a chance of winning back Winchester and the rest of the country at the next election.

Yours faithfully,
PAMELA MORGAN,
Rothemurchus, St Cross Hill,
Winchester, Hampshire,
November 21.

By train and bike

From Mr Richard N. Hutchins

Sir, In 18 years of retirement I have enjoyed cycle-rail travel in all parts of Britain (letters, November 20). I am convinced that one of the best ways to combine these two useful means of transport is to go "folded".

There are now folding cycles on the market which match the performance of conventional cycles. Under the old BR rules, which seem still to apply, "folded" cycles enclosed in a container or case... are treated as accompanied luggage and carried free.

My own strong cycle bag weighs just 14 lb, and my folding cycle weighs 28 lb. I have taken them by bus, coach, plane and train without any difficulty, and for the past eight months I have been making regular visits to a sick relative in five different hospitals and homes in Surrey, some 80 or 90 miles from my home. Never once have I

Essential mystery of the monarchy

From the Reverend Dr Ian Bradley

Sir, In all this talk of a Royal Family more in touch with public opinion (article and reports, November 21) we are in danger of missing the essential nature and purpose of monarchy.

The monarchy is not a democratic institution, still less the creature of popular opinion, but rather a divinely instituted symbol and mystery. At their coronations, our kings and queens are anointed in a ritual which has its origins in Old Testament times and underlines the spiritual nature of their calling. They are thereafter accountable first and foremost to God and not to a fickle populace so easily manipulated and swayed by the mass media. Their role may not be to lead public opinion, though in deep and subtle ways they can both express the mood of the nation and also exert a powerful example, but most certainly not are they there to pander to it.

We need to think much more about the religious basis of monarchy and the exercise of its spiritual function. In the case of our present Queen, it has been expressed in a sacrificial commitment to duty and public service and a sure and steadfast Christian faith fortified and nourished through regular churchgoing. In the case of her eldest son, who I fervently hope will be our next King, it may well take a different form, in keeping with his declared desire to be a defender of faith and his deep sensitivity to spiritual issues.

The Royal Family were clearly engaged in and deeply moved by Thursday morning's service at Westminster Abbey. Many of the courtiers and commoners attending it, by contrast, were caught by the television cameras chattering, giggling or maintaining a sullen silence through the great hymns of the Christian faith.

They might care to reflect on the message of those familiar words which rang through the Abbey as the Queen and Prince Philip left. God will save the Queen, not public opinion and certainly not the media.

Yours faithfully,
IAN BRADLEY,
7 Strathkinness High Road,
St Andrews, Fife,
November 21.

grounds rather than invest in services which everyone agrees are grossly underfunded. The fact is that early retirement has been used as one way of cutting expenditure in order to prevent deeper cuts to direct services. The genuine savings on long-term staffing costs have typically been recycled into new jobs, mostly in education and social services.

The Audit Commission acknowledges that many local authorities are already following the recommendations made in its report. Local government itself urged a more rigorous approach six months ago, following advice from the United Kingdom Steering Committee on local government pensions.

Yours sincerely,
JEREMY BEECHAM, Chair,
Local Government Association,
26 Chapter Street, SW1,
November 13.

In a flat spin

From Dr David B. Cook

Sir, Along with a number of other gifted and hard-working people, my wife has a PhD, which involved the study of the magnetism due to the spin of electrons and nuclei.

Both of us find the current campaign of vilification aimed at spin-doctors thoroughly offensive.

Yours sincerely,
D. B. COOK,
Department of Chemistry,
University of Sheffield,
Sheffield S3 7HF,
d.b.cook@sheffield.ac.uk
November 20.

Holiday reading

From Mr Nicholas Russell

Sir, I see that the summer holiday reading scheme was a success (report, November 20). May I recommend that some consideration should be given to running a scheme to teach reading in term time?

Yours,
NICHOLAS RUSSELL,
37 School Lane,
Haslingfield, Cambridge.
nicholas@larmprinters.bdx.co.uk
November 20.

Weekend Money letters, page 61

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

OBITUARIES

THE RIGHT REV HUGH GOUGH

The Right Rev Hugh Gough, CMG, OBE, Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia, 1959-66, died on November 13 aged 92. He was born on September 19, 1905.

As Bishop of Barking, Hugh Gough was chairman of the original Billy Graham crusade committee that organised the first visit to this country of the American evangelist in 1954. At the time, Dr Graham was a distinctly controversial figure, presiding over nightly rallies at Harringway Arena, culminating after two months in a Saturday mass gathering of nearly 100,000-strong — at Wembley Stadium. Gough, naturally, became caught up in the controversial reverberations.

Not all churchmen were happy with either Dr Graham's message or his methods, and in a debate at the Oxford Union Gough lost by one vote to George MacLeod of the Iona Community on a motion deploring the endorsement that he and his friends had given to the Graham crusade. Some of the statements made in the debate, the bishop declared in his own speech, had made him "extremely angry".

For the most part, however, Gough, who liked to take a glass of wine with a meal, lacked the rigid cast of mind that sometimes characterises the extreme Low Church party. Brought up very much in the Evangelical tradition — his

father was rector of St Ebbe's, Oxford — his own career within the Church of England was, until its rather sad end, a copybook success.

A chaplain during the war, he went on to be the post-war vicar and rural dean of Islington (and thus chairman of the once renowned Islington clerical conference) before moving to the Chelmsford diocese to become Bishop of Barking and Archdeacon of West Ham in 1948. It was from there, ten years later, that he was plucked by the avowedly Protestant archdiocese of Sydney to become its last expatriate English archbishop — a post that subsequently brought him the primacy of Australia.

A striking and imposing figure, Hugh Rowlands Gough went to school at Weymouth College, and from there proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took a third in history and a second in geography. He prepared for ordination at the London Bible College, and only perhaps broke loose from his background by getting married the year after he was ordained — something that in those days was usually frowned upon. The match, though, with the younger daughter of the 12th Baron Kinnaird, was a thoroughly advantageous one, and from then on the just-ordained priest had no financial worries. He moved easily and comfortably in elevated social circles — becoming chaplain to the High Sheriff of Cumberland when he was still vicar of a small parish in Carlisle.



His war service did his prospects no harm either. Volunteering as a chaplain in 1939, when he had just been appointed vicar of St Matthew's, Bayswater, he served in the Western Desert, Tunisia and Italy, being promoted to be a deputy assistant chaplain general, gaining a mention in

dispatches and being appointed OBE (military division) in 1945. He returned to his Bayswater parish at the end of the war, only to be swiftly preferred to the badly bombed but famous church of St Mary, Islington, where he had served his first curacy.

If there was a hiatus in Gough's upward rise within the C of E, it occurred perhaps in the decade that he spent as Bishop of Barking: in those days Evangelicals were seldom appointed to the diocesan bench. The summons to Australia, therefore, probably came as a relief, and at first all went well — with even the tugboats in Sydney Harbour sounding their whistles to welcome the arrival by liner of the bishop, his wife and their daughter.

In Britain, Gough had won something of a reputation for outspokenness, but the Australians were not necessarily averse to that, and Gough began to get into trouble only when he came out wholeheartedly in favour of Harold Holt's policy of supporting the Americans in Vietnam. He was accused of being "a recruiting sergeant for LBJ", and it was not only the war's opponents who thought he had gone too far.

It was not, however, his robust attitude towards public affairs which in the end proved his undoing. Incredible as it may now seem, this came about in a quite different way — when suspicions were aroused as a result of his having been spotted driving in a car with a woman who

was not his wife. (Religious Australia at the time was a fairly repressed and intolerant place.)

Although there was no real basis for scandal, the whole thing was blown out of proportion and eventually the archbishop was smuggled home on furlough to Britain — whence, a month or two later, a personal statement was issued saying that, because of his low blood pressure, his doctors had advised him to undertake no further work for six months, and that he felt that "it would be quite wrong for me to delay my return to Australia for so long". He was, therefore, resigning.

It was a poignant end to what had promised to be a successful period leading the Australian Church: in the year of his arrival the archbishop had been elected Primate by his episcopal colleagues, and on the eve of his departure he was appointed CMG on the nomination of the Government of Australia.

In 1967, a year after his return to England, Gough became rector of Freshford, a small village a mile or two outside Bath, which two years later was joined with the neighbouring parish of Limpley Stoke. He laboured devotedly in this rural setting, but he was not, as is customary with retired bishops, appointed an assistant bishop of the diocese. In 1972, after five years of parish work, he retired to live first in the city of Bath and then in the Wallops in Hampshire. He is survived by his wife and daughter.

ROBERT SIMPSON



Robert Simpson, composer and BBC producer, died yesterday aged 76. He was born on March 2, 1921.

ROBERT SIMPSON was one of the most serious and prolific of British composers of the past 50 years. By nature a traditionalist, and writing in traditional forms, he was a searching, wide-ranging composer and thinker whose oeuvre of symphonies and string quartets has yet to be fully assessed and digested.

Although for many years he wrote against the grain and spirit of the times, his resolute insistence on following his own well-defined path finally broke the resistance of those who saw him as merely harking back to the past. He came to be regarded as the most important and visionary symphonist since Shostakovich.

A tough, wiry polemicist, Simpson often fell foul of the musical establishment, especially when it cravenly followed every fashion. His most fierce dispute — which gained him notoriety well beyond his own field — was his battle in the early 1980s over the running of the Proms. He declared, loud and clear, that they should not be the preserve of one director for more than a year or two. One man's musical food is another's poison, so changing the Proms' administrator would allow for more than one taste to be represented.

This deeply held belief and attracted a deal of support; but, needless to say, the BBC establishment brushed off the idea and carried on as before. Simpson's complaint was not engendered by resentment, it must be said, nor any particular neglect of his own music. Arguably his symphonies may not have had their due over the years at the Proms but his works have been performed quite frequently on Radio 3.

Robert Wilfred Levick Simpson was educated at Westminster City School and studied music privately with Herbert Howells from 1941 to 1943. He was awarded his doctorate of music in 1951 on the strength of his First Symphony. After working freelance as a lecturer and a writer, he joined the BBC in 1951. From 1953 he was second in command of the Third Programme's music department and an eager champion of the music of Bruckner and Nielsen.

He resigned from the BBC in 1980, in protest against its

cultural policy, so freeing himself to criticise. He published *Carl Nielsen, Symphonist* in 1952 and a study of Bruckner's symphonies in 1967: these remain standard works on these composers.

Eleven symphonies and 12 string quartets form the backbone of his output. They appeared at regular intervals over 40 years, with the inspiration seldom flagging. At the root of his music is a Brucknerian tension wrought from the opposition of conflicting tonalities, while the style of harmony orchestration owed much to his other idol, Nielsen. Yet, despite its patent ancestry, his body of work shows an independent, forceful and logical mind at work.

Only superficially was he conservative. As his fellow composer Robin Holloway once wrote in *The Spectator*, "the relentless rigour with which he pursues the abstractness of construction paradoxically makes him one of the most radical of living composers anywhere".

Typical of his later output was his Ninth Symphony. Retaining the same pulse for its full 50 uninterrupted minutes, it demanded attention and perfectly showed the composer's Nielsen-like logic and Bruckner-like spaciousness — although the influence of Bach too was important.

In his quartets he was always ready to exploit devices to his own ends — the much-lauded Ninth Quartet, for instance, consists of 32 palindromic variations and a fugue on a theme of Haydn. Yet the grammar and intellectual toughness of Simpson's music were always at the service of abstract visions. His contribution to the chamber music repertoire, and not only string quartets, is enormous, and may come to be regarded as even more important than his symphonic output.

As he demonstrated in many broadcasts for the BBC, he was a penetrating and enlightening analyst of a great corpus of music. The rather dry delivery could not hide an urgent commitment to his message. He was also an inspirational producer. Music was his whole life, and he wanted others to be blessed with at least some of his own intuitions and joy at its peculiar ability to move the spirit.

In 1946 Robert Simpson married Bessie Fraser. She died in 1981, and a year later he married Angela Musgrave. There were no children of either marriage.

LEONARD MATTHEWS

Leonard Matthews, comics editor, died on November 9 aged 83. He was born on October 10, 1914.

AFTER the war, British comics were transformed by Leonard Matthews. As an editor at the Amalgamated Press in the late 1940s and 1950s, he revitalised their comic papers, updating the tired humour and lachrymose characters. His great passion was for the adventure strip, and during the 1950s he produced a string of varied titles with top-class artwork and stories.

In the following decade, as director of juvenile publications at IPC, his responsibilities broadened to include nursery comics and several educational publications.

Leonard James Matthews had always been interested in journalism as a career. One of his early forays into the profession was as editor of the house magazine for William White by the Bayswater store, where he worked for a short time before joining the Amalgamated Press in May 1939 as a sub-editor on the new comic *Knockout*, a rival to D. C. Thomson's *Dandy* and *Beano*. Shortly after his return to the Amalgamated Press at the end of the war, having served in the RAF, he became the editor of *Knockout*.

"I wanted to break away from the old British comic tradition of *Chips and Comic*

Cuts," he once said. "I had always loved adventure stories — particularly westerns and swashbuckling tales of Robin Hood and Dick Turpin and the like — and I sensed that everything that had been done in the past with the written word could now be done in pictures. So when I started editing *Knockout* in 1948, I concentrated on putting in adventure picture strips."

British comics would never be the same again. Out went the outmoded practice of setting blocks of text beneath the pictures and squeezing all the characters in the scene into every frame. In came a more cinematic style, with close-ups and midshots and with the scenes drawn from different angles and perspectives. The adventure picture strip had come of age. Matthews began to bring in long-established book illustrators to draw his strips, and gave them scripts worthy of their talents.

Matthews was known as the artist's editor. He had an unerring eye for the sort of artist that was right for his kind of adventure picture strip, and began to build a stable of talented artists whose work would dominate the comics under his control for several decades. His artists remained intensely loyal to him even though — or perhaps because — he was a demanding employer. One of the artists he discovered, Geoff Campion, said that he remem-

bers confessing to him, when offered a western script, that he couldn't draw horses. Matthews told him to go away and "bloody well learn". Campion became one of the finest horse artists in comics.

For many, the golden age of the British adventure strip culminated in the publication in 1951 of the *Thriller Comics Library*, a small-format, 64-page monthly. In the "picture-packed pages" of these comics, old heroes such as Robin Hood and the Three Musketeers rode again for a new generation of young readers. Matthews's enthusiasm inspired his artists and scriptwriters to helms rarely seen in any comic. Some of the very best adventures were scripted by Matthews himself.

Another of Matthews's successful adventure strip comics during the 1950s was the *Sun* companion paper to *Knockout* and noted for its historical strips such as *The Happy Hussar*, the long complete weekly adventures of Billy the Kid (transformed by Matthews into a Zorro-style masked avenger) and the flying ace Battler Britton.

In 1954, Matthews launched *Jack and Jill*, a new-style nursery comic. He applied the following principles: "Every story must make sense, every story must have a happy ending; no stories with a revenge motive, nothing to frighten the child." The success of *Jack and Jill* resulted



In the launch of two companion papers, *Playhour* and *Hardy's Own Paper*.

Further successful titles followed, including *Buster*, one of the longest-running comics of recent years, *Top Spot*, a weekly for late teenage boys, and *Princess*, planned and promoted as "a paper just like mummy's". In 1961 Matthews was appointed director of juvenile publications at IPC, which had by then taken over the Amalgamated Press. In the same year, he launched *Look and Learn*, which ran for more than 20 years. One of his few failures during this period was *Ranger*, a brave attempt at producing a boys' magazine amalgamating fact, fiction and adventure strip. Despite its quality, it lasted for only 40 issues.



After retiring from IPC, Matthews started *Martpress*, producing such titles as *Once Upon a Time*, *Disneyland*, *Pixie* and *Rupert Weekly* for a variety of publishers. Matthews was at home with all types of juvenile publications

PERSONAL COLUMN

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NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to the provisions of the Trustee Act 1925 that any person having a claim against or an interest in the ESTATE of any of the deceased persons named below, should send a statement of the claim or interest, together with any supporting evidence, to the undersigned, who is the executor or administrator of the estate, within the period of six months from the date of the death of the deceased person, or within the period of six months from the date of the publication of this notice, whichever is the longer period. The claim or interest must be stated in writing and must be supported by evidence. The claim or interest must be stated in writing and must be supported by evidence. The claim or interest must be stated in writing and must be supported by evidence.

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A RARE opportunity to acquire a complete set of the *Illustrated London Directory* for the year 1900. The set consists of 10 volumes and is in excellent condition. It is a valuable reference work and is a must for any library or collector. Price £150.00. Call 01753 601081.

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Lady Tryon, dress designer, died on November 15 aged 49. She was born on January 3, 1948.

Born Dale Elizabeth Harper in Melbourne, Australia, Kanga — as she was nicknamed by the Prince of Wales — faced more than her share of suffering with resolute courage. From birth she suffered from spina bifida, and she did not walk until she was nine. In London in the early 1970s she was introduced by Prince Charles to Anthony Tryon, a banker almost ten years her senior, and they were married at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, in 1973. As well as a mother of four and an accomplished hostess, she became a successful fashion designer, using £2,000 of her savings to open a dress shop, Kanga, in Beauchamp Place in 1980, eventually achieving a turnover above £1 million a year. She also raised money successfully for charities. But ill-health blighted her last

years, and in 1996, after many serious operations, a fall from an upper window left her with a broken back and fractured skull.

Obituary published on November 17.

Georges Marchais, Secretary-General of the French Communist Party, 1972-94, died on November 16 aged 77. He was born on June 7, 1920.

A bluff proletarian with an almost comical pugnacity, Georges Marchais had neither intellectual gifts nor statesmanlike vision. After a distinctly unheroic war, when he was apparently on the wrong side of the great divide in occupied France, he joined the Communist Party at 27 and rose to be organising secretary by 1961. As Secretary-General he at first loosened the party's ties with Moscow and moved it towards the Socialists, believing in a form of "Euro-

communism". But in 1977 he broke his alliance with the Socialists. This did not stop him in 1981 from accepting François Mitterrand's offer of some Communist posts in government but the party withdrew to pursue isolation in 1984. When communism in Eastern Europe collapsed in 1989-90, he was left blustering in oblivion.

Obituary published on November 17.

Stefan Lorant, photo-journalist, died on November 14 aged 96. He was born on February 22, 1901. A Hungarian Jew who moved to Berlin in 1920, Stefan Lorant was imprisoned in 1933 and moved to England the following year as a fervent anti-Nazi. His book *I Was Hitler's Prisoner* was to sell almost half a million copies. In 1937 he launched the pocket magazine *Lilliput*, which with its original subject matter, humour, and lively pictures achieved instant popularity. At a time when news photographers were content to present official likenesses and formal records, Lorant insisted that they get inside the occasion and capture the feel of events. In 1938, he launched another magazine, *Picture Post*, again providing a winning formula, but he did not stay long as editor. Having been denied British nationality he moved to America in 1940.

Obituary published on November 18.

Air Commandant Dame Jean Conan Doyle, DBE, Director of the Women's Royal Air Force, 1963-66, and daughter of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, died on November 19 aged 84. She was born on December 21, 1912.

The product of Sir Arthur's second marriage, Jean Conan Doyle remembered sitting in a big red leather chair next to the fireplace, listening to the sound of her father's nib rushing with hardly a pause across page after page. She was 17 when he died. She



joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1938. After the war she became head of the WRAF. It was, however, as the doughty champion of her father's good name and American copyrights, after the death of her brother in 1971, that she became best known to the public.

Obituary published on November 19.

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Shares close at best of the day

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1997 High Low Company Price Div % PE

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

565	407	Adnol	2000	104	24	11.1
566	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9
567	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9
568	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9
569	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9
570	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9
571	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9
572	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9
573	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9
574	305	Adnol	1997	417	43	11.9

BANKS

581	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
582	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
583	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
584	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
585	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
586	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
587	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
588	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
589	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1
590	100	Bank of America	1997	104	24	11.1

BREWERY, PUBS & REST

600	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
601	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
602	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
603	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
604	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
605	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
606	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
607	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
608	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1
609	100	Brewery, Pubs & Rest	1997	104	24	11.1

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

610	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
611	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
612	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
613	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
614	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
615	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
616	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
617	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
618	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1
619	100	Building & Construct	1997	104	24	11.1

BUILDING MATERIALS

620	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
621	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
622	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
623	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
624	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
625	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
626	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
627	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
628	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1
629	100	Building Materials	1997	104	24	11.1

CHEMICALS

630	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
631	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
632	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
633	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
634	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
635	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
636	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
637	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
638	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1
639	100	Chemicals	1997	104	24	11.1

DISTRIBUTORS

640	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
641	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
642	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
643	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
644	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
645	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
646	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
647	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
648	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1
649	100	Distributors	1997	104	24	11.1

Shares close at best of the day

LEISURE & HOTELS

650	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
651	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
652	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
653	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
654	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
655	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
656	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
657	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
658	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1
659	100	Leisure & Hotels	1997	104	24	11.1

OIL & GAS

660	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
661	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
662	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
663	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
664	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
665	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
666	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
667	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
668	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1
669	100	Oil & Gas	1997	104	24	11.1

RETAILERS - FOOD

670	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
671	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
672	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
673	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
674	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
675	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
676	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
677	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
678	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1
679	100	Retailers - Food	1997	104	24	11.1

RETAILERS - GENERAL

680	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
681	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
682	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
683	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
684	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
685	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
686	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
687	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
688	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1
689	100	Retailers - General	1997	104	24	11.1

OTHER FINANCIAL

690	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
691	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
692	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
693	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
694	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
695	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
696	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
697	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
698	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1
699	100	Other Financial	1997	104	24	11.1

ENGINEERING VEHICLES

700	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
701	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
702	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
703	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
704	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
705	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
706	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
707	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
708	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1
709	100	Engineering Vehicles	1997	104	24	11.1

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

710	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
711	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
712	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
713	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
714	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
715	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
716	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
717	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
718	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1
719	100	Food Manufacturers	1997	104	24	11.1

HEALTHCARE

720	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
721	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
722	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
723	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
724	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
725	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
726	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
727	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
728	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1
729	100	Healthcare	1997	104	24	11.1

THE TIMES Portfolio

£1,000 to be won

Check the numbers on your Portfolio card and find your eight stocks in the Portfolio panel below. In the column provided next to your eight shares enter the share movements as published on this page. Ignore fractions. Enter 16 as 16 (the symbol - means no change). After listing the price changes of your eight shares, add or subtract as appropriate to find your total which can be plus or minus. If your overall total matches the daily dividend you win or share the £1,000 daily prize.

No	Company	Group	Gain/Loss
1	MR Group	Sup Serv	
2	BAT	DIV Inds	
3	GUS	Ret Gen	
4	Tinsley	Robot Print	
5	Prison Grp	Print Pap	
6	Prison	Electronic	
7	Water Hall	Mining	
8	Grand Met	Media	
9	VTP	Media	
10	Thom	Ret Gen	
11	Dairy Fm Int	Ret Food	
12	Rocking	House Gds	
13	Save Group	Ret Gen	
14	Brit Bros	Mail & Cons	
15	Telecom	Electronic	
16	National Grid	Electric	
17	Inchcape	Disburs	
18	Burns	Ret Gen	
19	BBA	Engineering	
20	Greenock	Food Man	
21	Cable Wireless	Telecoms	
22	FS Cons	Mining	
23	Artha	Transport	
24	Storehouse	Ret Gen	
25	Energy Group	Electric	
26	Man Ed & F	Dth Fin	
27	Unichem	Healthcare	
28	AAF Inds	Mail & Cons	
29	Br Aerospace	Engineering	
30	Ransdons (H)	Breweries	
31	SOCCO Int	Dth & Gas	
32	SDX Bus Sys	Electronic	
33	Br Vias	Chemicals	
34	Stake	Engineering	
35	Euro Colour	Chemicals	
36	Borden TV	Media	
37	Railtrack	Transport	
38	RPS Group	Sup Serv	
39	St Wer Gp	Print Pap	
40	Ladbrokes	Leisure	
41	Charles Int	Ret Gen	
42	Dixons Grp	Ret Gen	
43	Provident	Dth Fin	

Portfolio

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DAILY DIVIDEND

+44

NEW BOY 30

Ken Clarke plc strides on to business stage

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

BUSINESS

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 22 1997

WEEKEND
MONEY
SECTION 2 PAGES 51-64

Alert hits Johnson Fry shares

By RICHARD MILES

SHARES in Johnson Fry Holdings, the fund manager, dived by 27 per cent yesterday after the company warned investors to expect a substantial loss for 1997.

Rebecca Thomas, managing director, said the loss before exceptional items would be £2 million after the closure of the financial products division and ten redundancies.

But Ms Thomas, appointed in September, said a large exceptional gain of £3.9 million from the sale of its property division earlier in the year would ensure the firm "published a profit for the year".

In the absence of "unforeseen circumstances", Johnson Fry said it would pay an unchanged final dividend of 2p on reporting its year-end results in late March. The shares closed 31.5p lower at 85p yesterday.

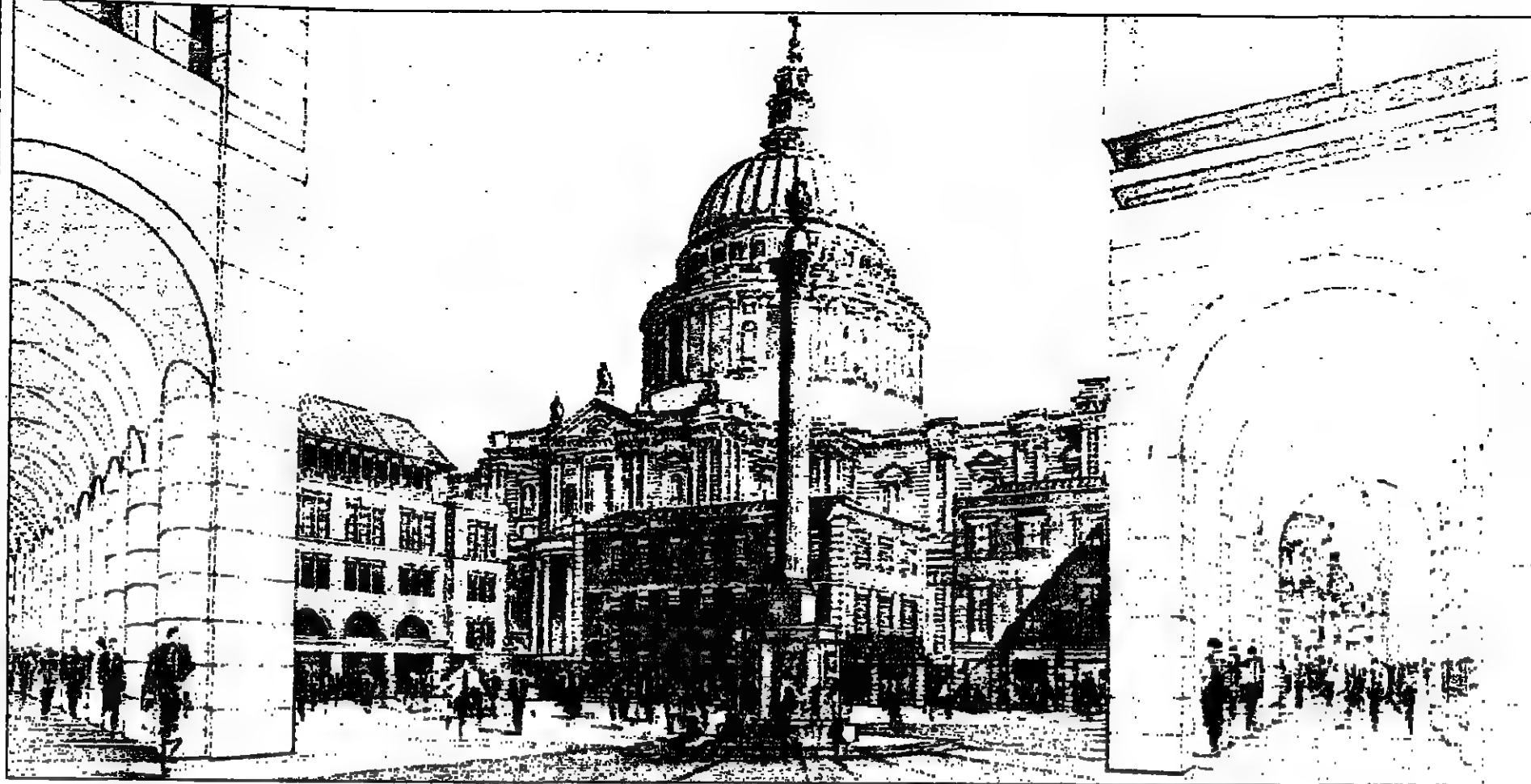
Since joining the company 18 months ago, Ms Thomas has sought to turn Johnson Fry from an advisory and trading business into a fund manager focused on the retail investor. In that time, funds under management have almost trebled from £330 million to £919 million.

As part of the conversion to fund manager, the insurance and independent financial advice businesses were sold off in mid-1996, followed by the disposal of Johnson Fry Housing, its property arm, early this year.

"It is not pleasant to have to do this sort of thing, but now is the time to do it," said Ms Thomas. "I have to deal with the historic business of old Johnson Fry. The financial products division was highly geared to volumes of new sales."

Johnson Fry, 35 per cent owned by directors and the 150 staff, insisted yesterday that it was determined to remain independent. In spite of reports last month that it was up for sale.

Tempus, page 31



The perspective from the southeast, as envisaged by architects, looking across Paternoster Square towards the Wren Chapter House with St Paul's Cathedral in the background

Liberty Life sights set on FTSE listing

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

LIBERTY LIFE Association may be ready to abandon South Africa in favour of a primary sharelisting in London and membership of the FTSE 100 share index.

The Johannesburg-listed company chaired by Donald Gordon, the insurance magnate, yesterday announced a radical restructuring aimed at creating an international financial services company.

Mr Gordon, 58, who with Sir Mark Weinberg founded Abbey Life in 1962, said that he believed the UK and America were good bases from which to turn Liberty Life into an international financial services company. At the end of June the group had total shareholders' funds of more than £1.5 billion and total assets of £4.4 billion. It controls Capital Shopping Centres, owner of the Thurrock and Lakeside retail complexes.

Mr Gordon said he was looking for acquisitions in the US and had considered bidding for Mercury Asset Management in the UK, now subject to an agreed £3.1 billion offer from Merrill Lynch. "MAM would have been good for us but Merrill Lynch could afford to pay over the odds for it."

He emphasised that the restructuring proposals were still being considered and a formal decision had yet to be reached. He said that life companies in the UK were too expensive because the UK was currently "favour of the month".

Analysts said Liberty Life would be taken more seriously as a global company if it relocated to the UK. Mr Gordon said that he had no intention of leaving South Africa to live permanently in this country.

He described the South African life assurance market as "very competitive" and added: "The cost ratios there are much lower than in the UK and US."

The proposed restructuring, announced yesterday, would simplify the group's complicated management and ownership structure, he said. There are a number of part-owned subsidiary businesses that needed streamlining.

A year ago Mr Gordon announced ambitious plans to compete with the biggest names in the pensions industry by creating a major new life insurance company. In a joint venture with the British Telecom Pension Scheme, Liberty was able to set up Hermes Liberty International Pensions, which specialises in group personal pensions.

Mr Gordon said expanding the company to make it an international player was his greatest ambition. "I would dearly love to achieve that before I stop working," he said. "I am not doing it for the money any more. I am doing it for fun. It is great fun negotiating deals when you are not being forced into doing them."

Mr Gordon described his role as "that of an elder statesman and strategic planner". His 40 years' experience in life insurance have made him an almost legendary figure in the industry. The restructuring is intended to cut out management layers and reduce potential conflicts of interest between controlling and minority shareholders, and give Liberty Life greater access to capital markets.

The plans for Liberty Life include increasing the company's involvement in the Black Economic Empowerment project, a South African scheme set up to help companies run by black workers. Liberty Life said that the plans would need regulatory approval and their success would depend on the state of equity and financial markets in the future.

Mitsubishi has new designs on Paternoster

By CARL MORTSHED

A JAPANESE property developer stepped gingerly into a British minefield yesterday with new proposals for the redevelopment of Paternoster Square, the ugly 1960s office development adjacent to St Paul's Cathedral.

Mitsubishi Estate Company is hoping that its masterplan will receive the green light from planners at the Corporation of London, permitting the demolition of the site and the erection of six new buildings designed by different architects, with a value on completion of about £400 million.

The scheme, designed by Sir William Whitfield, treads a narrow path, seeking to satisfy modernists and appease traditionalists, while making money for the developers. Chief among the traditionalists is the Prince of Wales, who famously condemned an earlier modernist redevelopment plan as "deeply depressing". A later neo-classical scheme favoured by the Prince proved to be financially unworkable.

Sir William's masterplan envisages the demolition of the raised piazza and walkways, lowering the site to ground level, thereby improving both views of the cathedral and pedestrian access. Sir William said that the failure of William Hollard's 1960s development was the attempt to impose a single architectural concept on a sensitive site, ignoring the needs of users. By using different architects, the scheme more reflects the higgledy-piggledy character of the City before the arrival of 1960s brutalism.

The new development will comprise 750,000 sq ft of offices. The square will be flanked with shops, while vehicle access is restricted to an underground gyratory that gave Sir William the inspiration for his masterstroke: in the middle he proposes a replica of an Inigo Jones Corinthian column that once graced the portico of St Paul's. Its plinth conceals a ventilation shaft.

Commentary, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	4885.8	(+77.4)
Yield	3.27%	
FTSE All Share	2344.82	(+25.29)
Nikkei	16721.58	(+413.09)
Dow Jones	7855.84	(+32.33)
S&P Composite	962.04	(+3.06)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	100%	(100%)
Yield	6.37%	(6.06%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Life long gilt	118 1/4%	(118 1/4%)

STERLING

New York	1.6899	(1.6895)
London	1.6898	(1.6895)
DM	2.9337	(2.9332)
FF	6.5589	(6.5520)
SP	2.3937	(2.3814)
Yen	212.56	(215.15)
S index	104.3	(104.3)

US DOLLAR

London	1.7458	(1.7402)
DM	2.9445	(2.9320)
SP	1.4179	(1.4115)
Yen	125.21	(125.87)
S index	104.3	(104.3)

TELECOMS

Telecoms	125.58	
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NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Feb)	\$18.80	(\$18.85)
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GOLD

London close	\$304.88	(\$303.55)
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* denotes midday trading price

Primark eyes Dow Jones unit

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

PRIMARK, the information group that owns Datastream/ICV, has emerged as a potential bidder for the troubled Dow Jones Markets, the financial information division of Dow Jones.

The business, which is shortly expected to be formally offered for sale, could be worth about \$500 million (£294 million).

Joe Kasputys, Primark chairman, said yesterday he would have a "very serious look" at Dow Jones Markets. Primark, whose main strength is in information on equities, would be interested because it would extend its reach, particularly into the foreign exchange markets.

Other potential purchasers could include Bloomberg and Reuters.

Hurn ready to join GEC as chairman

By PAUL DURMAN

SIR Roger Hurn, tipped to succeed Lord Prior as chairman of GEC next year, may be confirmed in the job on Tuesday.

Sir Roger, 59, is expected to make his plans known at the annual meeting of Smiths Industries, the engineering group of which he has been chairman since 1991, having originally joined the group in 1958.

Although he has increasingly taken a diminished role at Smiths since last year's appointment of Keith Butler-Whitellhouse as chief executive, Sir Roger accepts he could not remain chairman and take on the top job at GEC. Both groups have substantial businesses supplying electronic systems to defence and aerospace customers.

Lord Prior, a Cabinet minister in the Thatcher Government, is due to retire in March. Turning round GEC after years of underperformance is regarded as one of the toughest jobs in British industry.

Sir Roger has little to prove at Smiths, with arguably the best long-term record in the UK engineering sector. Pre-tax profits have grown from £25 million to £192 million since he took over as managing director in 1978. The value of the company's shares has multiplied almost 20 times.

Tempus, page 31

Coal industry forecasts hit RJB price

SHARES in RJB Mining lost 5 per cent of their value with more than 1.4 million changing hands after The Times disclosed gloomy government forecasts for the future of coal (Christine Buckley writes).

Next week John Battle, the Energy Minister, will come under increased pressure to make a commitment to the coal industry. Paddy Tipping, Labour MP for Sherwood, will lead a debate urging government action to stop the building of gas-fired power stations and to put money into clean-coal technology.

Mr Battle and Michael Meacher, Environment Minister, will face lobbying from the industry at a meeting next week.

Commentary, page 29

IBM gives £56m in options to Gerstner

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

IBM has given Lou Gerstner, its executive chairman and architect of its recovery, \$95 million (£56 million) of share options to persuade him to stay for five more years. He has already accumulated options worth a similar amount since he arrived in 1993.

The 55-year-old former investment banker will also continue to receive annual performance-related share option grants.

The company yesterday defended the pay package, which is unusually high even by US standards, by saying that Mr Gerstner had been the main driver behind the revival of the US's seventh-largest company. However, shareholders may have mixed feelings. It had been feared that IBM's share price would fall if Mr Gerstner sold his stake and left the company.

While Mr Gerstner's skills are widely acknowledged, he has recently been criticised for favouring share buybacks over acquisitions. He said yesterday that he was still looking for takeover targets.

IBM announced a large-scale buyback programme during last month's stock market plunge. It was credited with kickstarting a buying spree that led to the biggest daily rise in the Dow Jones industrial average.

Serious Fraud Office, boasted success in six out of six Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) trials, as Abdul Chiragh, a South London accountant, was sentenced at the Central Criminal Court to five-and-a-half years' imprisonment for fraud and false accounting.

Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, castigated the pensions industry over mis-selling.

So who shares the booby prize with Ann Iverson? Enter Nicola "Superwoman" Horlick, who would have done fine had she stuck at her old job... with Mercury Asset Management. That's the City for you.

JON ASHWORTH

A WEEK IN THE CITY

It was a week in which the City's women high-flyers put on a spectacular show of force — not always by choice. Ann Iverson called it a day at Laura Ashley, while Merrill Lynch made an agreed £3.1 billion takeover bid for Mercury Asset Management (MAM), creating up to 300 instant City millionaires. British Airways unveiled plans for a low-cost, no-frills European airline, flying from Stansted.

Monday saw the FTSE 100 index soar 150 points, fast closing, again, on the mystical 5,000 barrier. Thursday saw Wall Street leap 101. The Government gave the thumbs up to P&O's merger with Stena Line, creating a streamlined cross-Channel ferry operator, while London & Continental Railways confirmed that its high-speed Channel Tunnel link would run all the way to St Pancras station in North London. It had been feared that the line might fizzle out near the M25.

The sudden forced departure of a chief executive is routine enough — except when the company is Laura Ashley, brimming with two Englishness, and the victim is a tough-talking American who has posed in leather for Vogue. Ann Iverson, who worked wonders in the early Nineties proved unable to conjure up the same magic with chintz. She leaves under a cloud, but wealthier, collecting £450,000 in compensation on top of £22 million in pay and bonuses.

Another feisty American, Barbara Cassani, was named chief executive-designate of BA's new peanut-class airline, tentatively dubbed Operation Blue Sky. The move throws down the gauntlet to other no-frills operators such as Debonair, Ryanair and EasyJet — and spells good news for consumers. BA also announced a big cut in commission paid to travel agents, triggering an irate response.

Merrill's punt for MAM will add to the considerable fortune of Carol Galley, the most powerful woman in UK fund management, who is on course to collect £10 million from the deal. Similar windfalls await her top colleagues — Hugh Stevenson and Stephen Zimmerman.

Observers were quick to question the fate of other independent City fund managers, chiefly Schroders, Perpetual and M&G.

Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, heaped fresh woes on Sears, owner of Selfridges, by blocking the proposed £365 million sale of Freemans, its mail order business, to Littlewoods. Shares in Safeway suffered their sharpest one-day drop — falling 16 per cent to 330p on Wednesday — on a warning that Sercer competition, allied to supply problems, would wipe out profits growth this year.

Ros Wright, director of the

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PRUDENTIAL

Dialog at 'advanced stage' in talks over £33m sale

By FRASER NELSON

DIALOG Corporation, the online information company formed when Maid and Knight-Ridder Information merged, is poised to sell its document delivery and library divisions for about £33 million.

The company, now the largest player in the computerised market research field, said it was in advanced stages of talks with potential bidders and would complete an auction to the highest in the new year.

Together, Knight-Ridder's library and document delivery divisions have annual sales of \$37 million (£22 million). Analysts said that the level of interest in both divisions should allow Dan Wagner, the chief executive, to sell them for at least 1.5 times sales, or \$55.5 million (£33 million) — some £10 million above initial expectations.

The company said yesterday that it had completed its expected staff-cutting programme, shedding 334 jobs across its international offices, slightly above September's forecasts of 300 job losses. It has also closed about 20 of the 57 offices that came into the enlarged group.

Mr Wagner said the company was well within the £10 million set aside for the closures, which will leave Dialog with 1,060 staff in 20 countries while moving all its databases to a mainframe computer in California.

Shares of Dialog, which were relisted at 188p last Friday, against Maid's suspension price of 215p, gained 2½p to 180p yesterday.



Don Carty, president of AA, left, and Robery Ayling, chief executive of BA, may yet seal their alliance

New hope for BA in US link

BRITISH Airways has been given fresh hope that its troubled plans for an alliance with American Airlines could yet be realised (Oliver August writes). The US congressional aviation committee has backed a compromise formula that would allow the alliance if it were phased in over several years along with landing slots at Heathrow for competitor airlines.

The alliance had been opposed by the European Commission and competitors, which had demanded more Heathrow landing slots than BA was willing to hand over.

William Lipinski, a Democratic Congressman for Illinois, has written to regulators in Europe and the US to urge them to hold talks on the new compromise formula. Neither BA nor AA would comment on the compromise plan yesterday.

E-mail key to Microsoft case

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

AN INTERNAL memo from a Microsoft executive sent by electronic mail forms the key plank of the US Justice Department's antitrust case against the software house.

Microsoft stands accused of using its existing monopoly in the personal computer software market to gain dominance illegally in the growing

market for Internet software. Janet Reno, the US Attorney General, yesterday stepped up her attack on Microsoft's bundling of its Windows 95 package with the Internet Explorer product.

A \$1 million-a-day fine could be imposed as early as next month after the filing of a 30-page charge sheet in Washington. The sheet includes the incriminating e-mail from James Allchin, a senior vice-

president. Mr Allchin wrote on December 20 last year: "The current path is simply to copy everything Netscape [Microsoft's main competitor] does. My conclusion is we must leverage Windows more." He said that not bundling the two products means "losing our biggest advantage — Windows' market share". He encouraged other executives to "think first about an integrated solution".

Previously, Microsoft had argued that it had always intended Windows and Internet Explorer to be a single product.

The Justice Department now contends that the bundling was started this year. It said Microsoft was breaching a 1995 court-enforced agreement that narrowly restricts its software marketing. A number of computer manufacturers have claimed Microsoft

is forcing them to install Internet Explorer along with Windows to drive out Netscape's software.

The Justice Department said that the software bundling "has nothing to do with updating Microsoft's operating system. Microsoft's Internet Explorer was developed as — and in every way continues to be — a separate product from Microsoft's Windows 95 operating system."

AA to run satellite service

A POWERFUL consortium of British companies is joining the assault on the multibillion-pound market for in-car satellite technology (Kevin Eason writes).

Global Telematics, a joint venture between European Telecom and Racal, yesterday announced that the AA will run its new vehicle tracking, navigation and information system with Vodafone as the mobile telephone

carrier. The Carphone Warehouse, one of Britain's most successful mobile phone sales operations, is also being enlisted along with Lucas Kienzle.

Target sales are £50 million-a-year by the turn of the century, mainly achieved through after-market fitting of the sophisticated equipment to fleet-owned vehicles. Discussions with leading carmakers, such as Nissan, have started for assembly line installations.

Direct Line advert halted

THE Independent Television Commission has suspended the transmission of an advertisement by Direct Line after rival insurers complained.

Broadcasters have been told not to show the advert while the ITC investigates complaints that it is misleading.

The ITC said it received seven complaints accusing the telephone insurer of showing traditional insurance brokers in a damaging way. Among those

to complain was Norwich Union, which accused Direct Line of being "intentionally and damagingly misleading in its portrayal of brokers".

John Kitson, Norwich Union marketing manager, said: "We are delighted with the ITC suspension and it is a real victory for the insurance broker and Norwich Union. We believe Direct Line has intentionally tried to portray brokers from the past."

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Regulator warns banks over EMU

By RICHARD MILLS BANKING CORRESPONDENT

HOWARD DAVIES, chairman of the Financial Services Authority, the new super-regulator, gave warning yesterday that economic and monetary union would push banks into far-flung markets where they have no expertise.

Mr Davies told a London conference that it was "a matter of some concern" how banks intended to compensate for the loss of their intra-EU foreign exchange business and diminishing profitability in their core markets.

A number of banks have told regulators that they plan to build up their exchange trading in Eastern European and other emerging markets. "There must be serious doubts about the expertise of some of these banks in those markets, and about the extent to which there is room for new competitors in what remains a small and specialised sector," said Mr Davies.

While EMU posed little or no risk to London as an international financial centre, Mr Davies said it would accelerate consolidation in an industry already characterised by overcapacity.

Mortgage rate fears discounted

By CLARE STEWART

CONCERNS that a large number of homeowners are likely to be hit hard by sharply higher home loan payments when their fixed-rate mortgage deals run out next year have been discounted by the Council of Mortgage Lenders.

There have been worries that, after the run of rises in interest rates, mortgage payers are set for a payments shock once fixed-rate schemes end and they then start paying at a higher variable rate.

Fiona McAuley, senior economist at CML, says in the group's newsletter that, typically, fixed-rate loans are taken out on a short-term basis, of two to five years. CML figures also show that, of the 13 per cent of mortgages that are fixed-rate loans, nearly half will mature next year.

But, says the CML, a number of factors will cushion the impact of this rise. These include the increase in average earnings over the period of the fixed-rate loan.

The CML expects that more homeowners facing higher payments may choose to switch to another lender with more favourable rates.

Martin Currie cancels launch

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

MARTIN CURRIE, the Edinburgh fund manager, has pulled the launch of a new split capital investment trust after shareholders in General Consolidated, another split trust, turned it down as a rollover vehicle this week.

Martin Currie assumed the management of the £146 million General Consolidated trust (GOCIT) last year after its acquisition of Mortgage Fund Managers. Its new trust, Martin Currie High Income, had attracted pledges from holders of £40 million of GOCIT shares. However, a revolt by GOCIT income shareholders, led by Geared Income, a rival split trust that has tabled its own offer, and Gartmore Investment Trust Management, blocked the move, raising speculation that the two had done a deal.

Geared Income, a £76-million fund, invests solely in the shares of split capital trusts. Gartmore is also seeking to

launch a new split trust to succeed the £560 million Scottish National Trust that it manages. It increased its stake to 8 per cent in General Consolidated a few weeks ago.

However, Tony Reid, investment director of Broker Financial Services, which manages Geared Income, denied any deal and said the rejection by income shareholders had been overwhelming. Gartmore was unavailable for comment.

Sandy Dudgeon, director of Martin Currie, said: "Of course we are disappointed that a small number of GOCIT income shareholders blocked the scheme recommended by the GOCIT board." He said the board could still propose an alternative.

Mr Reid said the board wanted to turn General Consolidated into a unit trust. However, he admitted that Geared Income's bid had yet to receive tax clearance from the Inland Revenue.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Ford unions to meet over two-year offer

UNION officials at Ford car plants throughout the country are to be consulted over the next week on whether to accept a "final" pay offer worth at least 8.75 per cent over two years. The offer, tabled after two days of talks, was described as "disappointing" by the chief union negotiator yesterday. Tony Woodley, national officer of the Transport and General Workers Union, said the proposed deal would not redress the "drift" that Ford workers had suffered in their pay compared with other car companies. "We are disappointed with the offer, which we believe is at best only average compared to recent settlements," said Mr Woodley. "Ford workers deserve a better deal because of the productivity gains they have made in recent years."

Shop stewards at Ford plants across Britain will be consulted over the next week on whether the offer should be accepted. National union leaders will meet again in early December to decide their next move. Under the offer, the pay of Ford workers would increase by 4.5 per cent in year one, followed by a rise of 4.25 per cent or the rate of inflation plus 0.25 per cent, whichever is greater, in year two. Ford also offered an extra day's holiday from year two, to 25 days, and improvements on pensions.

Lehman sells off units

LEHMAN BROTHERS, the Wall Street investment bank, will sell its private client businesses in London, Hong Kong and Singapore to Prudential Securities of the US for an undisclosed sum. The firm is to focus on higher-margin institutional business, including investment banking, the company said. The sale affects around 20 people in London. Lehman will retain its GLG Partners division in London, which manages assets for institutions and wealthy individuals. Its other private client businesses will not be sold.

TRW in \$1bn US deal

TRW, the automotive and space technology company, has agreed to buy BDM International, which provides systems integration and computer services to government and commercial customers, in a deal valued at about \$1 billion (£580 million). The offer for the Virginia company is worth \$29.50 per share. TRW will launch a cash tender offer within the next five business days for BDM. It added that Carlyle Group, the investment firm, and affiliates, which own about 26 per cent of BDM, had agreed to tender their shares at the same price.

Financial services 'biased'

THE financial services industry is still failing to provide fully unbiased advice, according to a report from the European Policy Forum research institute. *Insurance Regulation in the United Kingdom*, whose sponsors include Guardian, Royal & Sun Alliance and PPP, calls on the new Financial Services Authority to foster an ethical approach that produces consumer-friendly products. It also says there is a need for greater disclosure about products. The report urges the FSA to deliver its promise to allow the industry to self-regulate.

Laidlaw increases bid

LIDLAW ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, the US waste management company, has increased its hostile takeover bid for Safety-Kleen to \$2.1 billion (£1.3 billion). The offer came just hours after Safety-Kleen agreed to be bought by Philip Services of Canada and two investment partners for \$1.9 billion. The contest for Safety-Kleen comes amid consolidation in North America's waste management industry. "We are advising Safety-Kleen shareholders to sit tight," said Tom Burnett, at Merger Insight, an institutional reserve service. (Bloomberg)

Reflec losses mount

SHARES in Reflec fell 2½p to 32½p yesterday after the manufacturer of reflective clothing and coated products reported a rise in first-half losses and said sales in the second half were unlikely to meet expectations. Losses were £264,000 before tax, compared with a £214,000 loss previously, despite a rise in sales to £390,000 from £80,000. Losses were 3.14p a share (3.09p loss) and there is again no interim dividend. The shares, which trade on the Alternative Investment Market, peaked at 123½p earlier this year.

DCS expands network

DCS GROUP said that it had expanded its European automotive network via the acquisition of two specialist suppliers in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The net consideration is £2.9 million. DCS said the acquisition represented an important step towards its strategic goal of achieving a leading market position in all leading European markets for automotive systems. Robin Lodge, executive chairman, said the acquisitions are expected to enhance earnings. The shares rose 17p to 252½p.

Chesterfield purchase

CHESTERFIELD PROPERTIES, whose chief executive is Robert Maxted, has acquired the Pallion retail park in Sunderland for £6.8 million. The park, which was developed four years ago, produces an annual rental income of £540,000, equivalent to £7.10 per sq ft. Tenants include Iceland, Kwiksave, ScottishPower and Poundstretcher. Rent reviews on the park begin in September next year and Chesterfield estimates the current rental value to be £9 per sq ft.

TOURIST RATES

	Mark	Bank
Australia \$	2.51	2.24
Austria Sch	21.76	20.10
Belgium Fr	64.05	59.09
Canada \$	2.516	2.328
Cyprus Cyp	0.807	0.836
Denmark Kr	11.82	10.93
Finland Mk	5.94	5.70
France Fr	10.24	9.56
Germany Dr	3.11	2.97
Greece Dr	489	499
Hong Kong \$	12.88	12.68
Ireland £	121	101
Israel Sh	6.34	5.89
Italy Lit	2089	2082
Japan Yen	226.43	208.90
Malta £	0.864	0.826
Netherlands G	3.615	3.320
New Zealand \$	3.05	2.61
Norway Kr	12.80	11.86
Poland Zl	312.53	291.50
Portugal Esc	8.88	7.50
Spain Ps	200.25	241.50
Sweden Kr	12.05	12.35
Switzerland Fr	2.55	2.34
Taiwan N	362.22	309.45
USA \$	1.791	1.651

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates are in dollars of trading yesterday.

THE SUNDAY TIMES FIRST AMONG EQUALS

Immaculately turned out, with a cool charm that captivates clients, Carol Galley is a formidable force in corporate Britain.

How the Americans agreed to pay £3.1 billion for Mercury Asset Management, making Galley the first woman to sit on Merrill Lynch's executive board.

Business Focus — The Sunday Times, tomorrow

CITY BALLET OF LONDON

Following its successful tour of its new production of *Beauty* City Ballet of London (Royal Patron HRH The Duke of York, Charity No. 1061536) is seeking sponsorship for a new programme of one-act neo-classical ballets, its education programme and its young choreographers workshop in 1998. Please reply in full confidence to: 0171 405 0044.

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A tale of two Cities



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Earlier this month Jonathan Guinness published *Requiem for a Family Business*. His publishers proclaimed that the book would shed light "on one of the most remarkable financial scandals to face the City of London". The author, they said, would present "an insider's view of that scandal".

As is so often the case, the book fails to live up to the blurb. Jonathan Guinness, aka Lord Moyne, a non-executive director of the family company for 27 years, goes into some detail about his idiosyncratic contributions to board meetings, but his insight into what went on when the company, led by Ernest Saunders, decided it would take control of Distillers seems to be informed as much by newspaper comment as by inside information.

Sadly, Lord Moyne is not available to give the interviews that his publishers promised and which might have put some colourful flesh on the bones of his tale. He is somewhat preoccupied at the moment with trying to explain his involvement with a Scandinavian outfit whose funds have gone astray, causing some alarm to the Swedish authorities. With delicious irony, the company is called Truster.

But while his *Requiem* may not excite the masses, we are about to see publication of what promises to be a rollicking good read on the same subject. David

Donaldson, QC, and Ian Glen-dinning Watt were the two inspectors appointed by the Department of Trade and Industry to unravel the Guinness affair. No author likes to labour in vain and at last their efforts are to see the light. The President of the Board of Trade has decreed that the public should be able to read the results of the inspectors' inquiries and on Thursday they will go on sale at Her Majesty's Stationery Office. It may be that what appears will be a somewhat edited version of the inspectors' original, but it still promises to provide plenty of material for bar-room gossip around the Square Mile. For some, it will revive old memories of how the City used to function. For Guinness was only an exaggerated version of what had gone before. For more recent recruits to the City, it will introduce a cast of characters worthy of a West End musical, perhaps a follow-up to *Chicago*, currently packing them in at the Adelphi.

Because of its historic nature — the Guinness takeover of Distillers was in 1986 — the only careers that it is likely to affect are those of the two inspectors, now due their moment of fame. But the timing of its publica-

tion is an extraordinary coincidence. It comes in the week in which both Grand Metropolitan and Guinness hold the extraordinary general meetings that will ratify their merger. Shareholders will also have to vote to approve the change to the ghostly name, Diageo. Some may feel that, despite the imagery of the famous stout, the chance to shrug off a name which has become synonymous with City sharp practice should be welcomed.

Battle fighting the wrong coal battle

John Battle, the Energy Minister, has made increasingly plain his irritation with Richard Budge, chief of the eponymous RJB.

When pressed on the clear crisis looming in the coal industry, the aggressively defensive Mr Battle has responded with remarks such as "the pres-

sure is on Mr Budge, quite frankly". The Minister has said that he cannot ask the electricity generators, with whom RJB is negotiating new contracts, "to subsidise Mr Budge".

These may be the comments of one blunt Yorkshireman on another but they do not amount to a ministerial response.

The Government is faced with an imminent crisis that threatens the entire coal industry. Mr Battle seems interested only in focusing the debate on Mr Budge and the way that he conducts his business.

This is to ignore the real issues, which go far beyond one company. The Labour Government has failed to deliver an energy policy despite endlessly trotting out the pledge to make energy "diverse, secure and sustainable". In its short time in power, it has hastened the dash for gas in electricity generation, which will lead to heavy dependency on imported gas from politically

unstable countries. It has con-signed coal purely to the work-ings of the market place where British-produced stocks have to fight against government-subsidised imports from Germany.

Mr Battle's department has forecast a halving of jobs in mining while critical negotiations continue. He behaves as if energy is out of his hands, dependent on the vagaries of the market and on the negotiating abilities of one man.

Yet the Government should be more than a mere spectator at the fate of an industry. Were it so inclined, it could take action to ensure a future for the coal industry and so deliver the diversity of energy it is so fond of talking about. It could halt the new building of gas-fired power stations or offer an incentive for power stations that have clean- ing equipment for coal. It could invest in clean-coal technology or seek to relax its onerous environmental commitments.

If it does none of these things, we will see the once unthinkable situation of a Labour government presiding over the ultimate death of the mining industry. Even for a party that has modernised to the extent that new Labour has, it is not a politically palatable prospect.

The pressure is not only on Mr Budge: it is also on Mr Battle.

Pragmatic solution

As with house prices, every-one has a view about architecture. Mitsubishi, the Japanese property developer with the doubtful privilege of promoting the latest Paternoster Square redevelopment, is keeping its head down. This is wise given the torrent of abuse from people in high places that was heaped on previous schemes.

Yesterday, Mitsubishi stood behind its adviser, Schroders, and the brains behind the new proposal, Sir William Whitfield. The author of the masterplan braved torrents from the heavens as he took interested parties on a tour through the rain-stained concrete slabs of the square near St Paul's Cathedral. He was only

partially protected by an umbrella held by a young lady from Mitsubishi.

It is to be hoped that this scheme draws fewer brickbats because it is exactly what is required. To the visitor, London looks a bit of a mess compared with the grand boulevards and set-pieces of Paris and the power-play of New York towers. But in that confusion of styles and streets lies the City's charm and personality, where turning a corner can reveal a splendid view. Sir William has recognised this and produced a plan that is in essence very much a compromise and therefore very British.

Instead of one architect, we have many. Purists will regret the lack of consistency, but they forget that the City of London is a land of pragmatists where a successful deal is one that works for everyone.

An inspector calls

NIKOLAI GOGOL'S play, *The Government Inspector*, has entertained theatre audiences around the world. But in his native Russia the jokes sound a little thin. Apparently, the average Moscow shopkeeper is visited by 19 government inspectors a year. Small wonder, says *The Economist's The World in 1998*, that Russia's underground economy is now worth more than its official economy. That's real red tape in action.

Colt seeks £200m for growth in London

By CHRIS AYRES

COLT TELECOM, the European telecoms operator that specialises in providing high-quality services to businesses and governments, is seeking to raise £200 million through an equity offering and a debt issue.

The company said the money would be used for a potential fourfold expansion of its London operations, which currently run from Canary Wharf to the City and the West End. It would also be used to establish new services in Berlin, Zurich, Brussels and Milan.

Colt already has operations in Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich and Paris. The move was greeted with enthusiasm by the City, with Colt's shares jumping 13p to 598p yesterday, having more than doubled in value in four months. Confidence in the company is strong even though it has still not made a profit, with last year's pre-tax losses standing at £11 million, on turnover of just £34 million.

However, earlier this month Colt reported a 144 per cent rise in sales to £55 million for the nine months to September 30.

Colt's performance will be closely watched by telecoms analysts, who had their fingers burnt earlier this week when shares in Ionica, Colt's

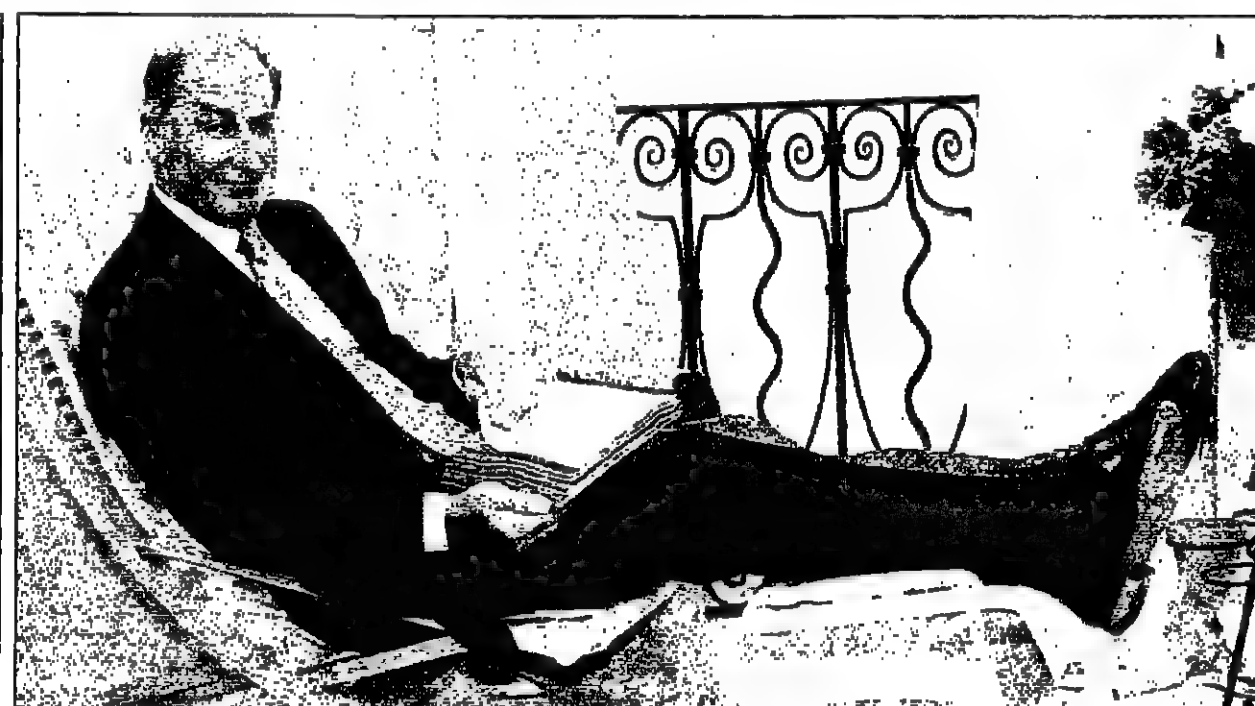
wireless rival, plunged 101p to 156p, having floated in August at 421p.

Interest in start-up telecoms companies will heighten even further next month with the flotation of Energis, the telecommunications arm of the National Grid, which is expected to be valued at about £1 billion. Energis will also aim its services provided by telephone lines slung over electricity cables — at "the business market".

John Doherty, director of investor relations at Colt, said: "The technology we use enables us to offer reliability and quality of service, although we also have competitive pricing. But we still have a long way to go. At present we have 800 customers in London, and we believe there is a potential market of 3,000 to 4,000. There is a huge amount of major business focused in the City," Colt said the problems that had hit Ionica would not affect its own business.

Colt said that half of the £200 million being raised would come from the offering of 16.8 million shares at 585p each; the other half would come from a debt issue of about £100 million.

Tempos, page 31



Measuring up: Sir Peter Osborne, chairman of Osborne & Little, the wallpaper and fabrics company, is taking a cautious view of current trading, but expects a satisfactory outcome for the full year. (Fraser Nelson, writes). Shares fell 42p

to 597p, a nine-month low, as the company said that a slow start to the year had coupled with currency problems to make for an uncertain second half. The company returned a flat pre-tax profit of £2.2 million (£2.01 million) for the six

months to September 30 after launching four Nina Campbell ranges and the first Stewart Furnishings range under its stewardship. Earnings were 22.1p (20.2p) a share, and a dividend of 9p (8p) is due to be paid on January 21.

Bid for Energy Group referred

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Energy Group is only weeks away from hearing its fate after a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation into the £3.65 billion bid for the company by Pacificorp yesterday went to the Department of Trade and Industry.

A decision from Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, is not expected until January. The announcement comes at a similar time to the DTI's publication of its Green

Paper on utility regulation. One of the issues which led to the surprise referral of the bid was the concern that The Energy Group could be harder to regulate if it were owned by a large US parent.

This affected none of the previous bids for electricity companies made by US businesses under the previous Conservative Government but in Opposition Mrs Beckett had called for referrals.

Chancellor's 'golden scenario' aims at noble entry into EMU

Today is a red-letter day. For the first time we have a Green Paper setting out a blueprint for the development of our tax system. It will finally take our economy from its ignominious exit, under the last Government, from the ERM on Black Wednesday (later revised to White) to my golden scenario of EMU entry.

I have a number of tax proposals to announce. As pledged in our General Election manifesto, I intend to introduce greater fairness to our tax system. I have three measures to announce today:

□ A new starting rate of income tax at 10 per cent for the first £2,000 of taxable income, which will benefit all taxpayers.

□ Changes to inheritance tax and the taxation of trusts to ensure that each generation is responsible for its own wealth-creation.

□ A new general anti-avoidance measure. While tax avoidance is not illegal, it costs the Exchequer many millions of pounds each year. From now on, the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise will have powers to void any arrangement they decide is unacceptable. I recognise that some commentators have suggested this is contrary to natural justice and the rule of law, and puts too much power in the hands of the Civil Service.

Since this view has mainly been expressed by accountants and solicitors who are responsible for the tax avoidance, I have ignored their comments on the matter.

I also want to reduce people's dependency on the State for pension provision. It has been scurrilously suggested that I imposed on the pension funds in my first Budget will affect tomorrow's pensioners. But we need to do more and I have two proposals.

On Tuesday, Gordon Brown will deliver the first ever pre-Budget report. Peter Wyman, head of tax at Coopers & Lybrand, has been reading the Chancellor's thoughts



Brown: "greater taxation fairness"

□ I intend to introduce a new Individual Savings Account, thus honouring yet another of our manifesto commitments. Tax relief will be given on investment into specially designated investment accounts, which will be sold through the National Lottery operator to provide a nationwide network of easily accessible investment points.

Relief will be given at the new starting

rate of tax for investment of up to £2,000 each year for every adult whether or not they are taxpayers. It will be paid for by the phasing out of Peps and Tassas over the next five years. It will revolutionise the saving habits of the country.

□ I intend to halve the rate of capital gains tax for assets that have been held for more than ten years. The cost of this valuable measure will be met by an increase from 40 per cent to 55 per cent for gains on assets that have been held for less than three years.

The 55 per cent rate will also apply to gains that result from land sold for development, regardless of how long that land has been owned.

Finally, I come to business taxation. In my first Budget I announced a phasing-out of foreign income dividends to bring to an end an unacceptable abuse of the tax system.

However, since that Budget unscrupulous businesses have further exploited the system. Accordingly, more drastic action is now needed. I have therefore determined to end the imputation system of corporation tax. In future, companies will no longer be required to account for ACT on their dividends.

A system of payment in advance for corporation tax will be introduced to even out the cashflow variance that would otherwise arise. Since there will no longer be ACT, it follows that shareholders will no longer receive a tax credit in respect of dividend receipts.

They therefore will quite properly be liable to income tax at the normal rates. These measures will meet the cost of the new 10 per cent starting rate of income tax in full. At the same time, relief for past, unutilised ACT will no longer be permitted, producing a one-off saving for the Treasury of £7 billion.

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Rates effective 3.11.97. The interest rate charged on the Five Year Fixed Mortgage will be 5.39% (2.29% APR) until 1.2.2002. APR is variable. Example: An interest only mortgage of £50,000 over a 25 year term (300 monthly payments) completing on 1.12.1997, secured against a property being purchased for £157,000. 300 monthly payments net of £134,306.21. Mortgage loan to value for Home Purchase and Remortgage 75%. If you require a loan up to 90% or 100% loan to value other Five Year Fixed Rate products are available. This example is calculated to include an arrangement fee of £385, Valuation fee of £145, Solicitors costs of £145.88 (England and Wales), Superior Specialised Premium £343.37 (Ireland 1). If the mortgage is repaid in full or in part within seven years of completion an additional Product Early Repayment Charge of 8% of the amount repaid in the first six years and 1.5% of the amount repaid in year seven will be made. This offer may be withdrawn at any time. The interest rate charged on the Two Year Fixed Mortgage will be 3.99% (5.1% APR) until 1.2.2000. APR is variable. The 3.99% PA and 5.1% APR interest rates include a 0.25% discount where Superior Specialised Premiums and contents insurance is taken out. This insurance must remain in force until 1.2.2000 (Two Year Fixed) or 1.2.2005 (Five Year Fixed). In the event that the insurance is cancelled during the fixed rate term Northern Rock will remove the additional 0.25% discount on the loan. A written quotation can be obtained on request. Only available to owners 18 years of age or over. Subject to status. Subject to our current lending criteria. You can apply for these products if you are a first time buyer, you are moving home or you are switching your mortgage from another lender. Northern Rock cannot advise its customers on their personal tax. If you do have any queries about the tax implications of our products, you should contact your local tax office. Representative only of the Loans & General marketing group members of which are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and FSAO for the purpose of making introductions to other representatives for recommending, advising on and selling life insurance and investment products bearing Loans & General's name. FSA details available on request. 78845

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Monday, January 22, last year, is a day that will always be etched on Sir Rocco Forte's memory. The hotelier had spent more than four months defending his family business from an unwelcome £3.8 billion bid by Granada. The outcome was on a knife-edge. Sir Rocco had been given little chance of saving Forte but had managed to convince many City cynics that he could revitalise the business. But one investor was key: Mercury Asset Management. It held 14.4 per cent of Forte's shares.

After a busy weekend Sir Rocco arrived at his office in Holborn to be told that Carol Galley and Stephen Zimmerman were on their way to see him. Sir Rocco thought that a visit from the duo — who had built MAM from a small and unloved operation within SG Warburg, the merchant bank, to arguably the most powerful fund manager in the City — could only be good news. He was wrong. "They came in person to tell Sir Rocco their decision," remembers his sister, and fellow Forte board director, Olga Polizzi. "That was the cruelest thing."

But in the minds of Galley and Zimmerman this was not cruelty. It was courtesy. They had turned up to explain to Sir Rocco why they were selling: that, despite his hard work, accepting Granada's bid was merely in line with the investment philosophy that they had followed for more than a quarter of a century. This philosophy delivered London Weekend Television into Granada's hands two

Perfect practitioners of the art of value management

years previously, leading to accusations of lack of loyalty by Sir Christopher Bland, then LWT's chairman, now Chairman of the BBC. This philosophy had revolutionised the City, given the duo seven-figure salaries and bonus packages and would ultimately persuade Merrill Lynch to pay £3.1 billion for MAM.

The bespectacled, punctilious Galley and thin, immaculately dressed Zimmerman started at MAM on the same day in 1971. To be accurate, they actually started at Warburg, as the fund management operation was not separated from the merchant bank at the time. Both were graduate trainees. The 22-year-old Zimmerman had hoped to work in corporate finance but found himself in the less glamorous area of fund management. Galley, famously, started in the library, but former colleagues say this was a temporary posting and it was not long before she joined Zimmerman under the wing of Leonard Licht, the controversial fund manager who created the MAM philosophy.

Under Licht, MAM took aggressive stakes in companies, much higher than would be dictated by the traditional system of investment weight-

IN THE HOT SEAT

CV: CAROL GALLEY
STEPHEN ZIMMERMAN

Carol Galley: born 1948; Gosforth Grammar, Newcastle, and Leicester University; 1971 SG Warburg; 1981 MAM director; 1987 joint deputy chairman. Stephen Zimmerman: born 1949; Clifton College, Bristol, and City of London College; 1971 SG Warburg; 1981 MAM director; 1987 vice-chairman.

ings. MAM used principles described as "value management". This involved detailed analysis of a company to work out what it should be worth, buying a substantial stake and encouraging the management to work

hard to deliver this worth. Galley and Zimmerman were the perfect practitioners of the technique. They were highly intelligent, hard-working and came from outside the City establishment of public school and Oxbridge. "They were dedicated and focused," remembers Licht, who left MAM five years ago, claiming it was getting too big. They surrounded themselves with similar people, such as Nicola Horlick and Peter Young, who both joined Morgan Grenfell with unhappy consequences. However, the group always had a City insider as chairman and frontman — first Peter Stormonth Darling and then Hugh Stevenson, a Warburg corporate financier said to have "gone native" when he joined MAM.

Even now, those who know Galley and Zimmerman say they largely live for their work. Galley may have a cottage in France and her box at the opera. Zimmerman may have his season ticket at Arsenal but MAM dominates their lives, a facet which may appeal to their new American colleagues, as will their fierce loyalty to the company. Horlick, who joined MAM in the early 1980s, leaving in 1991, remembers Galley for her

dedication to the company philosophy, constantly pointing out to subordinates that certain ways of working were "not the Warburg style". Galley has promoted the idea of breaking up the massive amount of money that MAM manages into bite-sized chunks in an attempt to allow the group to grow without losing the spectacular performance that was behind its growth in the first place.

But many doubt whether this can continue. The recent performance of the firm's largest pension fund product — the MFS equities and property fund — has plummeted from 20th out of 70 in 1994, to 47th in 1995 and 67th last year. Other funds are said to have performed better, but MAM does not publish the figures. "Trustees have told us they [MAM] are not communicating well, saying their record stands for itself," says a rival. "This could be interpreted as arrogance."

Another says that the sheer size of the combined Merrill Lynch/MAM business — with £266 billion of assets — will mean it has to be more conservative. Even MAM admits that expanding the business further in the UK is a near-impossible task and longingly eyes Europe for further growth. "With a fund that big, the only way to recreate the old MAM performance is to buy 20 per cent of Shell or Unilever and frighten the management," laughs a former colleague. "I don't think even Carol and Stephen would want to do that."

JASON NISSE



Stephen Zimmerman and Carol Galley live for work



Hat fits: Kenneth Clarke arrives for an F&C board meeting

Ken Clarke plc strides on to business stage

Kenneth Clarke, back-bencher, free at last. Liberated from high office by the Labour landslide, he can now truly indulge his private passions. There is Europe, of course. The Conservative whips were never hugely successful in silencing him on the subject. Nowadays, he talks about little else and has the satisfaction of being paid for airing the views that so often caused apoplexy among his Cabinet colleagues. Earlier this month, he gave eight speeches in a week, several on the single currency.

But the former Chancellor has come out of the closet in far less predictable ways. Once his sartorial fame rested on his soft brown shoes. Now there's that hat. Mr Clarke insists that this jaunty addition to his wardrobe, a trifle, has nothing to do with trying to impress his new colleagues in company boardrooms.

The former Chancellor shows all the enthusiasm of a new boy in his corporate role, says Janet Bush

He admits that he has always had a penchant for headgear, but never wore hats in public while he was a minister (except at football matches) because Tory style-gurus disapproved. Part of the delight of being a backbencher is that he can now be completely indifferent to his public image. "It's all me now," he says, gleefully. He is even contemplating growing "an Ernest Hemingway type of beard", but only when he is a lot older.

Mr Clarke certainly looks fitter and more relaxed than he did at the Treasury in the dog-days of the last administration. He says that he is less tired, but not noticeably less busy. His

role as standard-bearer of his party's pro-European wing and as the new chairman of the Tory Reform Group keeps him well occupied. But he now has to squeeze into a bursting diary his considerable new portfolio of corporate posts.

Ken Clarke plc, the new enfant terrible of British business, is headquartered in prime office space at No 1 Parliament Street. It may not be in the House of Commons or the Treasury, but the windows of his third-floor office have close-up views of both. One wonders whether Gordon Brown ever sports a cigar-smoking figure gazing at his old command post across the street just a little enviously.

Mr Clarke has taken on four private sector jobs since the election. He has been appointed non-executive director of Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust, a chairman of UniChem, the chemist that on Thursday announced a £278 million merger with Alliance Santé of France to create the second-largest player in Europe's drugs market.

He is to act as adviser to Daiwa Europe, part of the Japanese securities house, and next year he becomes non-executive deputy chairman of British American Tobacco, once BAT's financial services business has completed its merger with Zurich Life, the Swiss insurer.

It has been estimated that once he formally goes on the BAT payroll, probably in the summer, Mr Clarke will be earning something in excess of £200,000 a year. He is not embarrassed in the least by such riches after 18 years as a relatively lowly paid Member of Parliament. He has clearly enjoyed the process of testing his market value.

"I found myself for the first time in my life using my negotiating skills on my own behalf, on how much I was going to be paid. Did he find this easy? I got into it, yes," he guffaws. The nation's teachers and nurses must be breathing a sigh of relief that his victims across the negotiating table this time are the bosses, not the workers.

In the summer, lunched for old times' sake by a group of economics editors, Mr Clarke was clearly being bombarded by offers from the private sector. If he had not been committed to politics, he says that he would have had the chance of even bigger jobs than the ones he has now chosen. He has turned down dozens of offers from publishing houses to write his memoirs because he has no intention of retiring from Westminster for many years.

Freudian flip

"TALENTLESS bunch of no-hopers" was, I believe, the phrase used in *Absolutely Fabulous* to sum up the Freuds. The descendants of the founder of modern psychology have found fame in even more distinguished arenas — one a disc jockey, the odd novel knocked out, a public relations man, even an actor in the City — hi, David. Now one has found a niche at the most epochal project of the late 20th century, the Millennium Dome.

Matthew Freud, the public relations one, of course, is joining Sam Chisholm, former chief executive of BSKYB, his sidekick David Chance and Michael Grade, on the executive committee. Freud was signed up by Chisholm. "He is a huge force of energy and he understands the youth market," he says. We shall see.



down and see your trading floor?" he asked. Alas, it closed a decade ago.

● A VERY bad day yesterday for Charles Fry, chief executive of Johnson Fry, who was forced to issue a humiliating loss warning. Not quite as humiliating, though, as an event a few years back in his career. Fry is one of the few recipients of a fourth-class degree, though he does not boast of it. His brother Jonathan, chief executive of Burmah Castrol, spilled the beans to a colleague of mine while back. I had no idea such a thing existed. A fall is a fall through lack of ability. A fourth is when you are deemed to have the ability but have been too idle to use it.

City Spice?

EMI has a new Spice Girl. The label has signed up gorgeous, leggy Kathleen O'Donovan, advocate of Girl Power in the City and finance director of BTR, as a non-executive director.

I am well aware that O'Donovan hates being deemed worthy of comparison to that frolicsome fivesome of the stage and that she will doubtless find this item deeply offensive. But then I doubt she ever reads anything quite as trivial as a diary column.



Kathleen O'Donovan: Spicing up the City

Doing time

MAX DOLDING, highly rated leisure analyst at James Capel, was at the High Court this week giving evidence in the Queens Moat Houses legal action, and he does not sound like he enjoyed the experience. Cross-examination by John Bairstow, the former chairman whom Queens Moat's current management accuses of misleading the market using analysts as fall guys, was about notes taken by Dolding at meetings with the company in the 1980s, and Dolding admitted he might be tempted to throw such notes away in the future.

Bairstow asked if he had been a leisure analyst for 33 years. "About 22. It seems like 33," says a dejected Dolding, adding: "I have actually been in this court for 33 years, it seems." So why did he attend? "Because I was subpoenaed to be here."

Soap dish

IN what I hope will not become a trend, DX Communications, the mobile telephone retailer, has launched the official DX Coronation Street Mobile Phone. Purchasers will receive text messages carrying the latest about the Street. Alternatively there is a weekly recorded message with the latest "news". Just the thing for those unfortunate soap opera addicts who long ago lost touch with reality.

MARTIN WALLER



Liz Dawn: Vera Duckworth on line

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THE TIMES

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To receive your CDs before Christmas, post your order to arrive by Friday, December 5. The offer closes on December 31, 1997.



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Suitor on the line adds 8p to Vodafone shares

Shares of Vodafone were among some of the heaviest traded among the top 100 companies amid claims that a rival might be stalking the mobile phone operator. By the close of business last night a total of 8.36 million shares had changed hands as a price rose 8p to a new peak of 380p, where the company carries a price tag of £11.6 billion. In fact, there has been a steady turnover in the shares since the takeover bid by the mobile phone operator. The takeover bid was made by the mobile phone operator, which was the standard of Vodafone.



Three of the Spice Girls, the stars of EMI, up 11p

as the ruling price stood at 115p. Safeway shed a further 9p at 319p, stretching the loss on the week to 81p, as brokers continued to reflect on this week's profits warning accompanying the interim results. Nikko, the Japanese securities house, has slashed its profits forecast for the full year from £450 million to £425 million. SmithKline Beecham continued to benefit from JP Morgan's decision to reiterate its "buy" recommendation overnight in New York with a rise of 17p at 592p. US support was also directed at other British drug companies, with Zeneca jumping 48p to £18.03 and Glaxo Wellcome 39p higher at £13.56 in response to the news that the EU had approved Combivir, its anti-HIV treatment.

Standard Chartered jumped another 36p to 728p, bringing the rise during the week to 130p.

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MAJORS OF THE WEEK

Company	Current Price	Week's Change	Notes
Safeway	319p	-85p	Profits warning
Nikko	115p	-17p	Assets swap
Standard Chartered	728p	+36p	Results disclosed
Glaxo Wellcome	13.56	+39p	EU approval
SmithKline Beecham	592p	+17p	US support
Zeneca	18.03	+48p	EU approval
Glaxo Wellcome	13.56	+39p	EU approval
SmithKline Beecham	592p	+17p	US support
Zeneca	18.03	+48p	EU approval

WALL STREET

Index	Nov 21	Nov 20	Nov 19
Dow Jones	8,345.34	8,345.34	8,345.34
S&P 500	2,345.67	2,345.67	2,345.67
Nasdaq	4,567.89	4,567.89	4,567.89

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Country	1 day	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
France	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Germany	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Commodity	Price	Change
Gold	345.67	+0.12
Silver	12.34	+0.05
Palladium	234.56	+1.23

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Term	Rate
Spot	1.5450
1 month	1.5450
3 months	1.5450

MAJOR INDICES

Index	Value	Change
New York (midday)	8,345.34	+12.34
Tokyo	10,123.45	+10.12
Hong Kong	10,567.89	+5.67

RECENT ISSUES

Company	Price	Change
BCH Group	200	+1
Buckland Inv Wts	10	+1
Buckland Inv	18	+1

RIGHTS ISSUES

Company	Price	Change
Meyer Int n/p	360	17
Regent Sys n/p	211	17

MAJOR CHANGES

Company	Price	Change
Kidson	33.40	+7.40
Partridge Fine	80p	+8p
Skelton	150p	+14p

OTHER STERLING

Commodity	Price	Change
Gold	345.67	+0.12
Silver	12.34	+0.05
Palladium	234.56	+1.23

FTSE VOLUMES

Company	Volume
ASDA	2,700
ASDA	2,700
ASDA	2,700

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TEMPUS

Over a barrel

Should the market apply a discount to oil companies that invest in politically unstable countries? Enterprise Oil believes it should. Its chief executive last week questioned why the market failed to factor environmental and political risks into the equation. Anyone taking his speech to heart might have concluded that Enterprise Oil was a buy, given the company's focus on "safe" Britain, Norway, Italy and the US. Unfortunately, he spoiled his argument with a warning about production delays and Enterprise stock suffered a pasting. But the issue is worth debating. While Enterprise fell, its sister company, Lasso, has been enjoying a share price boost and the latter is heavily invested in "unsafe" countries: Algeria, Libya and Indonesia. Lasso is quick to point out that its operations in politically volatile countries have enjoyed a much greater level of stability than in Britain where democratic government ensures that the tax regime is in constant flux (and may be about to change again). Indeed, the burden of appealing the public seems to be Enterprise's problem in Italy where Agip, its partner, is attempting to secure permits from local governments in the impoverished south of the country.

Political risk may be more a question of perception than actuality and that leaves an integrated company such as Shell at more risk than a pure oil producer such as Lasso with no link to outraged consumers. What does move share prices is the rate of growth. If Lasso has had a good run, it is due to a run of drilling successes. Lasso and Enterprise are now almost level-pecking in valuation terms but they are both cheaper than their US rivals and both rate a buy.

Smiths Ind

Shares in Smiths Industries have fallen by almost 20 per cent since it reported its latest set of good results last month. This looks excessive, even allowing for the production disaster at Boeing, an important customer for Smiths' avionics business. So far, at least, Smiths is continuing to deliver its products on time. The length and consistency of the company's track record has given the aerospace and medical devices group a premium rating that makes it vulnerable in a nervous stock market. Sir Roger Hurn's gradual takeover of the chief executive's job to Keith Butler-Whitcomb, previously unknown in the City, gives investors another reason to worry. It is highly unlikely that

Johnson Fry

WHERE is Johnson Fry going? The company has been a bit of an identity crisis since the Government pulled the rug from under its core business in 1993: selling business expansion schemes to private investors. In the intervening years, Johnson Fry has dabbled in several businesses, but without much success. Now the firm is to make a go of fund management, or at least that is the line peddled by its new managing director Rebecca Thomas. She has dismantled and sold off the advice and insurance arms, as well as its property business. Six weeks ago she closed the financial products division, leaving only a skimpy portfolio of unit and investment trusts. The rationale for switching to fund management is clear: the business provides steady revenues and is free from the volatility of broking, and the dependence on high volumes

Colt Telecom

AFTER the lonic debacle earlier this week, the City's enthusiasm for another telecoms business is waning. The Colt share price bears every resemblance to another stock market tyro racing towards the edge of a cliff, having doubled in value over the past four months from 271p to just under 600p. However, Colt is not a mirror image of Ionic. For a start, it actually runs a successful network in London. Businesses and government departments seem to be willing to fork out extra cash for high customer service and good line quality. The idea is also working in Paris, with the rest of Western Europe looking just as keen. But large question marks still hang over the business. Last year it made £11 million pre-tax losses; it is moving very fast, almost too fast to allow scrutiny; and it has still not delivered anything to shareholders but positive sentiment. There is very little independent analysis of its value, which calls into question its current share price, which appears to have been plucked out of thin air. Perhaps a great company, but a shame about the hype.

EDITED BY CARL MORTIMER

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SHOPPING

BERNARD LEVIN

HOME LIFE

TRAVEL



Fashion knits that won't give men the needle

Page 5



Why Claudia should be allowed to light-up

Page 7



Paternity trouble: a mother tells her story

Page 6



Sporting parents' guide to skiing for children

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THE TIMES WEEKEND

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 22 1997

Diana, the last fairy-tale princess

The life and death of Diana, Princess of Wales has been turned into a children's story, but one that the Royal Family may find too close for comfort.

Roger Boyes talks to one of the Austrian authors



Robert Menasse, one of the authors of the *The Last Fairy-tale Princess*, and Gerhard Haderer, the book's illustrator

Once upon a time there was a young girl called Sophie, who did not believe in fairy princesses. Fortunately, Sophie's father was a novelist, her mother a historian, her aunt a journalist and their family friend a cartoonist, Gerhard Haderer, known for his scathing caricatures of the Queen of England.

And so a fairy-tale was re-invented in time to fill the Christmas stockings of German children.

The Last Fairy-tale Princess was written for five to nine-year-olds who missed out on the storybook life of Diana, Princess of Wales, obscured as it was by the adult maze of eating disorders, adultery and divorce.

On the day that the Princess died, Robert Menasse, an Austrian novelist, headed out from Vienna to his country cottage with his family to do some work on his novel. "I must

confess that Lady Diana never interested me," he said. But his life, he found that weekend, had been invaded by the death of the Princess. "On the car radio: Princess Diana, Princess Diana, Princess Diana. The newspapers: the Princess. Conversations with my wife: the Princess. On television: the funeral. What did my wife, my sister, and I discuss over dinner? Correct.

"Then my daughter suddenly piped up: 'Why are you talking about a princess the whole time? Princesses only exist in fairy-tales.'" The eight-year-old girl was irritated that the grown-ups were obsessively talking about a child's subject without even involving the children.

The short book redresses the balance. The pictures can be viewed as parody — the Queen, in particular, comes over as a grumpy mother-in-law — and the words are witty to adult readers. But the main audience

is little girls who have to be told gently that the marriage of a beautiful girl to an eligible prince does not, in itself, constitute a happy end, or even a happy middle.

Modern fairy-tales have footnotes and postscripts. "There was once a kindergarten teacher," the book says. "She lived in a land surrounded by water. The country was ruled by an old Queen guarded by men who wore fur helmets even in summer." The Prince, whose ears are distinctively shown in the pictures, "liked to wear checked skirts and woollen knee socks. Most of all he liked to play polo, a ball game which is very difficult because you

have to ride horses while playing it". The couple met, married and "never before have so many people in the world watched television at the same time".

The media weave in and out of the story because they, too, are part of modern fairy-tales. Indeed, journalists play the role of wicked wolves.

"The Princess was photographed and watched the whole time... she was never left in peace."

The result: "The Prince was so upset by the fuss that he preferred to spend his time with a lady-friend, who shared his interest in riding and who no one wanted to photograph."

This being a fairy-tale for little girls, the Princess's clothes feature strongly. "She had the very best clothes and when her cupboard was too full, she sold them. And because a princess is different, her worn clothes were worth more than they were new. She earned lots of money, which she gave to the poor and the sick."

And then something happened which never happens in fairy-tales: "The Prince and the Princess divorced. This was so outrageous that the Princess was followed by photographers and reporters everywhere she went. The whole world wanted

to know: what would the beautiful Princess do now?"

After the divorce, the princess became the most photographed woman in the world. And so her clothes became even more precious and earned even more for the poor and the sick.

After her death, the authors say, "her old clothes were worth ten times what they were worth when she was alive".

The little girl to whom I read this story understood the point: that the Princess's clothes were somehow part of her magic, like gold spun out of thread.

The lonely Princess fell prey again to the evil photographers when she fell in love with a millionaire. "He loved the Prin-

cess so much that he wrote poems for her and had them engraved on silver plates which he placed under her pillow."

Then, the Paris chase, the fatal crash. The most dramatic picture in the book depicts Dodi Fayed (identified only as "the millionaire") making a dash to his car with Diana... "In those days it became dangerous to be seen with a camera."

Adult irony edges into the narrative. "It was a sad time for the famous conductor, for the famous psychotherapist, and the very famous missionary

Continued on page 2

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ANOTHER TIME.
ANOTHER FACE.
REVERSO DUO.



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Their last minutes: the fairy-tale depicts Dodi Fayed (identified only as "the millionaire") making a dash to his car with the Princess of Wales, eluding the paparazzi who play the role of wicked wolves

Continued from page 1
and Peace Prize winner who died in the same week. Because nobody found the time to talk about their deaths.

Children love statistics. So many newspapers were sold after the crash "that Finnish woodchoppers had to work twice as much as usual" to supply the wood that made the paper that produced the newspapers. Planes full of flowers had to fly from Israel to keep up with the demand for floral tributes.

The Queen does not escape lightly in this tale. "The old Queen never much liked the Princess," the book says. "Now she had to do all kinds of things to honour her, because otherwise the sad people would have chased her out of the palace."

And in the whole land flags hung at half-mast as a sign of grief — except over Buckingham Palace, until "the people compelled the Queen, whether she liked it or not, to hang her flag at half-mast as well".

Sophie's mother, who is narrating the story, tells her daughter: "That was the tale of the last real fairy-tale princess. And because she died, she lives still."

That the Princess of Wales lives on is certainly the impression one gains from German newspaper stands: the front pages of 12 titles this week carried pictures of her with headlines such as "Diana — Evidence of Murder?", "Diana Speaks to her Children from the After Life", "Charles to Camilla: I Don't Want to See You". In Berlin,

'The people compelled the Queen, whether she liked it or not, to hang her flag at half-mast'

students have been enrolling for a term of courses on the "semiology of the Diana myth".

The myth of the Princess has had an impact on many continental novelists. "Writers are voyeurs," Menasse says. The function of a writer, he says, is to disentangle myths from their interpretation, to set the story straight. "First there was Oedipus, then there was the Oedipus complex. Yet we behave as if it were the other way round —

as if the Oedipus complex was always there and the figure of Oedipus is just someone who matches the symptoms."

The same is in danger of happening to the Princess of Wales. "There is as yet no Diana syndrome, but soon well-born anorexic daughters will be told that there was always such a syndrome."

Suhrkamp, the publisher of *The Last Fairy-tale Princess*, has sold the rights of the book around the world,

and is talking to British publishers. The central question is whether the British reading public is ready to accept, so soon, the reshaping not only of the Princess's life story but of a specifically national myth.

Some British readers may also find Gerhard Haderer's illustrations too adult satirical. He portrays the Queen as a scowling matron with an outside crown, and in one of the scenes shows the Princess hobnobbing on a sofa with celebrities while Michael Jackson is sitting on the floor playing with one of the young Princes.

Menasse's fairy-tale devotes more space to the national mourning of the Princess's death than to her marriage; in some ways this flatters the British people but it may, over

time, seem to be the correct reading of the relationship between the Princess and the British psyche.

Menasse argues that the Princess is a key to understanding the modern world. "To describe our world we do not need to resort to the ancient myth. We have our own myths and our own fairy-tales."

After the adults had compiled the text, they read it over and over again to Sophie to ensure that she understood the story. The fairy-tale ends up, like the Princess's life, "as an easily understood story which we cannot completely understand".

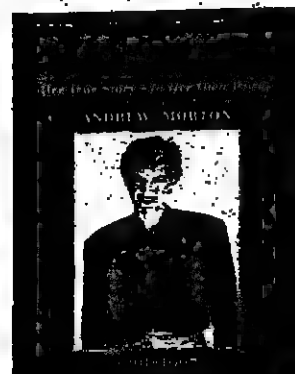
The book is dedicated to Sophie.

● *The Last Fairy-tale Princess*, by Elizabeth Eva and Robert Menasse. Illustrations by Gerhard Haderer (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt).

TOP TEN

Morton still outsells the rest

■ *Diana: Her True Story* — in her own words by Andrew Morton (Michael O'Mara, £15.99). Controversial biography. Sales: £1,357,372.
■ *Diana, Princess of Wales: A Tribute* by Tim Graham (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.99). Photo-story of her life. Sales: £313,173.
■ *Diana: Her True Story* by Andrew Morton (Michael O'Mara, £6.99). The original exposé. Sales: £152,551.



■ *Diana: A Tribute to the People's Princess* by P. Donnelly (Bramley Books, £7.99). Sales: £88,715.

■ *Diana, Princess of Wales 1961-1997: A Tribute in Photographs* ed. Michael O'Mara (Michael O'Mara, £15.99). Sales: £85,934.

■ *Diana: Her New Life* by Andrew Morton (Michael O'Mara, £6.99). Sales: £74,814.

DIANA

PRINCESS OF WALES



A Tribute
TIM GRAHAM

■ *Diana: A Life and Legacy* by Anthony Holden (Ebury Press, £16.99). Sales: £38,222.

■ *Diana Remembered* by *The Daily Telegraph* (Macmillan, £12.99 and £14.99). Sales: £31,358.

■ *Diana: The People's Princess* by Nicholas Owen (Carlton Books, £12.99). A retrospective. Sales: £27,955.



■ *Diana Princess of Wales: A Tribute to Our Princess* by Audrey Daly (Ladbyrd Books, £1.50). This pocket-money buy has 20p of the cover price donated to the Diana Memorial Fund. Sales: £23,234.

● Sales from Aug 31 to Nov 15. Source: Whitaker BookTrack.

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THE MARKET

Diana still big news in the book world

People who believe that the market for books on Diana, Princess of Wales is saturated, should think again. Alex O'Connell writes. International interest in her story is unprecedented — there are three Diana books in the *New York Times* bestseller lists — and as many as 50 more books on the Princess her life and death are planned for publication before the first anniversary of her death next summer.

While British publishers negotiate with the German publishers of *The Last Fairy-tale Princess*, there are signs that Christmas sales of the books already on offer are levelling



A Chinese bookseller pins up a poster promoting Diana books. Interest in the Princess's life and death is unprecedented

out. Such delights as the *Telebooks* are now outstripping Diana in the bestseller lists.

But the trade is hoping for a late Christmas rush and is confident of a surge in the run-up to next year's anniversary.

While Andrew Morton still tops the list with *Diana: Her true story* — in her own words, followed by the photographer Tim Graham's *Diana, Princess of Wales: A Tribute*, biographers have little doubt that there is room for more.

Among those with books in the pipeline are the acerbic writer Julie Burchill, whose description of Diana some years ago in a newspaper column as "the people's Princess" has been plagiarised without shame by Tony Blair.

Burchill is pro-Diana and her book will contain plenty of large, flattering pictures accompanied by spiky prose — the spikes being used in defence of her heroine.

Two *Time* magazine journalists are finishing an investigation into the circumstances of Diana's death, looking those responsible and providing a detailed chronology of her last moments.

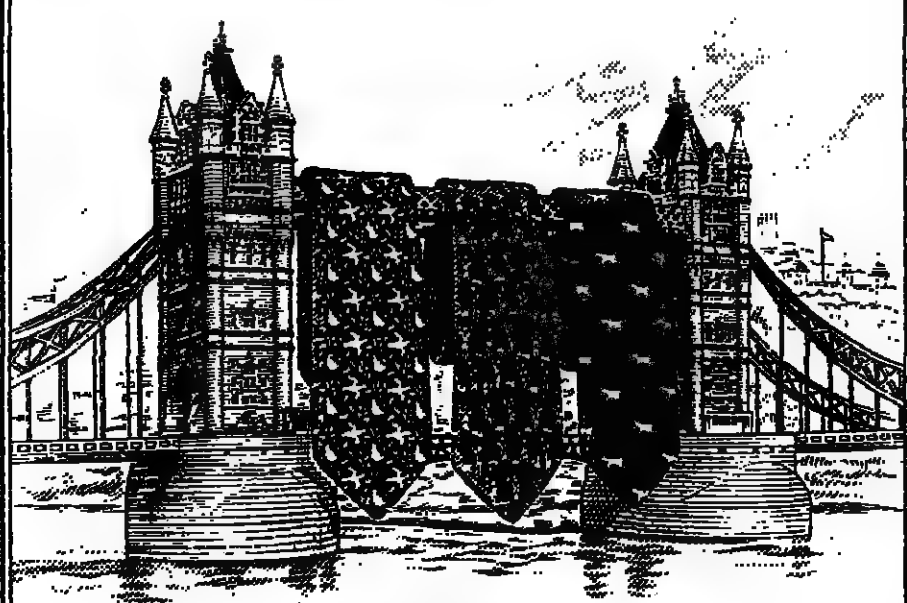
Death of a Princess: an Investigation will be one of the first serious attempts to determine who was responsible for the accident on that Sunday night in August and, as a result, is likely to sell.

The market will take an investigative book and there is room for more picture books as well," says Georgina Capel, Julie Burchill's literary agent. "But it can't take any more of those general books."

The royal biographer Sarah Bradford, whose book *Elizabeth, a Biography of Her Majesty the Queen*, was serialised in *The Times*, believes a serious treatment of the Princess would sell. "I was sent a lot of Diana books to review and I dug my heels in and said no because most of them were too awful," she says. "There was one called *Letters from God*, written by children to God after her death, and another called *The Wisdom of Diana*."

Bradford, an admirer of Andrew Morton's book — "it is still the best whatever your view of whether the tapes should have been included or

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Who's been sleeping in my bed?

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY



A kiss recorded on heat-sensitive film. White shows the hottest areas of the body, the face and underarms, while the cooler parts are shown in dark blue



Ordinary detergent bubbles, at around one five-hundredth the thickness of a human hair, are one of the thinnest substances visible to the naked eye



An electron micrograph of a human hand, showing the build up of thousands of sweat droplets produced after an hour's exercise

Sweating in terror, you are locked into a hideous dream of carnivorous aliens swarming over your body. The alarm jolts you awake. "It was only a nightmare," you think, but in fact the real nightmare is only just beginning. You roll out of bed, leaving your partner to luxuriate for a little while longer on her warm pillow... where a small civilisation thrives. These are *Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus* — the flesh-eating pillow mites. Under the microscope they are hulking armoured beasts, with eight legs and massive rhino-like necks, which makes them superbly equipped for life inside our pillows.

Their feet have flared pads, like a creature from *Star Wars*, to prevent them sinking into the soft filling, and since it is hard to see in the dim light, they signal romantic availability not by crude bellowing calls, but by the polite release of a floating vapour.

The insect swivels its huge neck to get a directional fix, and then, as gracefully and balletically as an armoured monster can, trundles hopefully forward for the trysts that await, to produce yet more of these generations that live beneath us, microscopically nibbling our loose skin flakes.

Their population can be as low as 10,000 in ultra-hygienic homes, but if this is the house where busy professionals only change the pillowcases, but neglect to rinse, soak, boil or simply wash the pillow itself, then the inhabitants can be discreetly fruitful and multiply for weeks, months or years.

In homes like this, each pillow might be home to 400,000 or more creatures. And with the half-pint of water vapour we exhale over them every night, they are safely incubated.

In the kitchen, dad opens a bottle of freshly-squeezed orange juice. Some of what's there actually comes from squeezed oranges, but that is pretty expensive stuff, so a lot of it is simply recycled pulp wash, a substance made by spray-blasting otherwise unusable rinds. Since pulp wash on its own tastes as terrible as you'd expect, sugar is added, then some of the active chemical from nail varnish remover, to give the pulp wash a palatable tang, and then varnish solvent, to keep that tang from getting too strong.

To stop the floating mess from breaking apart entirely, a dose of the

David Bodanis
reveals the
terrifying world of
microscopic bugs
and chemicals that
invade our daily life

embalming fluid formaldehyde — or a chemical near-cousin — goes in: the chemical is ideal at forming tight linking groups between proteins, be it dissolved bits of cadavers or scattered flecks of pulp wash.

The first glasses are drunk contentedly, but the teenage daughter reacts furiously when more is offered her. Don't they realise that she just so happens to be on a diet? The mother tries to ignore the outburst, but several hundred nanograms of the peptide hormone ACTH are likely to be cascading down from her brain, in a reverberating response to her daughter's flare-up. This can upset her immune system for hours, making her more susceptible to cold viruses or other microbial assaults.

The baby, meanwhile, is sitting on the carpet and investigating his sister's leather jacket, which is coated with thousands of cotinine molecules, residue from the cigarettes she smoked the evening before. The molecules bounce off the leather into the air and float into the sniffling baby's lungs. Some of the molecules will pass into his bloodstream and end up, months hence, stored in his growing hair. The carpet beneath him is densely impregnated with hairs, skin flakes, textile fibres, fragments of dead insects, pollen, bacteria and millions of particles of months-old cat saliva.

Blissfully unaware of this microscopic jungle, the family gathers itself for a trip to the shops. Outside the shopping centre now — the daughter lagging ostentatiously behind — where solar photons which were speeding through space at the orbit of Venus just two and a half minutes ago crash on to the family. Everyone's mood unexpectedly goes up, for the crash-impacting photons stimulate their endorphin levels to rise.

The family is likely to be greeted by tiles at the entry, which makes them speed up, but then there might be

carpets once they are in store, which makes them slow down. They are also likely to wear to the right — which is why shopping centre owners can charge higher rates on that side.

The son takes out a stick of chewing gum as he browses. Chewing gum has to be made of substances soft enough for chewing — Vaseline, lard or beef tallow are commonly in there — and trap them in a bouncy rubber matrix. To stop unpleasant leakages, bits of children's glue are mixed in, along with dollops of sticky soap, or even polyethylene — the stuff that makes up plastic bags.

The parents pause at a food shop, eager to drink a liquid mash that plants evolved to fatally over-accelerate the neurotransmitters in ancient bulge-eyed insects. It is coffee, of course. When a non-dairy creamer is stirred in, it becomes attractively white as it is poured out. This is guaranteed by manufacturers mixing in titanium dioxide. It is the same whitener that sloshes around in buckets of white latex paint, which is something to think about while sipping coffee outside a DIY store.

Back home, the tail-thumping dog is desperate to greet the returning family. If there is a big slobbery kiss — and who can resist? — then several squirming *Entamoeba gingivalis* predators that live in the mouth of 50 per cent of domestic dogs will be transferred over. These can survive for days or weeks in your mouth, squirming around our gums for their live bacterial prey.

Along the way there is likely to be a squelching *Alien*-like expulsion, as up to 16 baby amoebae emerge from each one. Most of the babies quickly battle each other to the death, or simply free fall from where they try to cling on to us and, with a barely noticed gulp, they are swallowed.

The day is over, so it is up to bed. While dad turns the thermostat nice and high — ideal for boosting the pillow-mite population — mum helps her son fluff up his pillow. Each whacking compression shoots geysers of dust mite body parts into the room and they float down over the boy all night in allergy-inducing haze.

There is more to do, but the parents are tired. They climb the stairs to sleep, and to dream.

● *The Secret Family*, by David Bodanis, published by Simon & Schuster (£18.99).



Household dust is rich in hairs, skin flakes and fibres from clothing and furniture. At the centre of the electron micrograph is a fragment of an insect's compound eye



Orange juice is often seen as an antidote to colds but while the vitamin C crystals of ascorbic acid dissolve in the human body, most of them float to the bladder

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GLENMORANGIE WOOD FINISHES

For those who nose.



Sir Nicholas Goodison with Sue Jackson and some of her automata in the Cabaret Mechanical Theatre. "They should be seen as works of art"

Playtime for grown-ups

Sir Nicholas Goodison's outwardly patrician manner conceals an almost boyish enthusiasm for mechanical toys. It is a lifelong interest that regularly lures the deputy chairman of Lloyds TSB and former chairman of the Stock Exchange into an unusual establishment in the heart of Covent Garden.

Sue Jackson's Cabaret Mechanical Theatre exhibits and sells automata — the intricate, ingenious and often wickedly humorous mechanical toys of which Sir Nicholas is a leading collector. "They are extremely colourful, very amusing and provide a lot of fun," he enthuses. "When you have people to dinner, they love to play with them."

Sir Nicholas bought his first one when he was 19 and serving in the Army in Germany. He now has 900, from pecking hens and cone puppets to designs by such leading British craftsmen as

Paul Spooner, Peter Markey, Keith Newstead and Ron Fuller.

Many were acquired through Ms Jackson, who originally opened a craft shop in Falmouth, where she started exhibiting the work of Peter Markey and Paul Spooner. In 1985 she opened in Covent Garden. "I don't like the words art and craft, shop, exhibition or museum — I wanted to create a place where everybody could just come and have fun," she says.

Although there is an admission charge, Ms Jackson insists it is not a money-making venture, but a labour of love. She recently had to sell two prized originals to an American collector for £27,000 to keep going; most pieces range in price from £15 to £1,500.

"I always recommend visitors to London to come here because it is one of those

wonderful unsung places that are a joy to discover," says Sir Nicholas, who admits that although he often comes just to look round, he usually ends up buying something.

On this occasion he parts with £865 for the latest annual Paul Spooner limited edition — a suggestive piece entitled The Green Ball and described as "a woman having a nice time with her washing machine". As the handle is turned, the wooden mechanism makes the machine spin in a most realistic way until a green ball is thrown from the front.

"The flow and the sequence of the movements are what make it so clever," says Sir Nicholas. "And the way he articulated the whole body marked him out as a man of genius."

He is also a great admirer of Peter Markey's wooden wave machines, which recreate an ocean swell using a series of complex wooden gears. Sir Nicholas bought one of his

larger pieces and donated it to the National Museum of Wales, where it is displayed in the foyer. A lifesize golden eagle and a gannet were donated to the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood after he commissioned them from artist Roy Hewson, only to find that they were too big for his house.

Sir Nicholas's love of art has always been linked with his business interests, and he is currently chairman of the Courtauld Institute, the Crafts Council and the National Art Collections Fund, the independent charity that raises more than £2.5 million a year to help museums and galleries buy works of art.

One of the first things he did after taking over at Lloyds TSB was to fill the building with works of 20th-century British art, much of it by young artists. "When I arrived, the offices were third-rate, like a station waiting room," he recalls. "I wanted visitors to go away feeling that this was a company of quality and style."

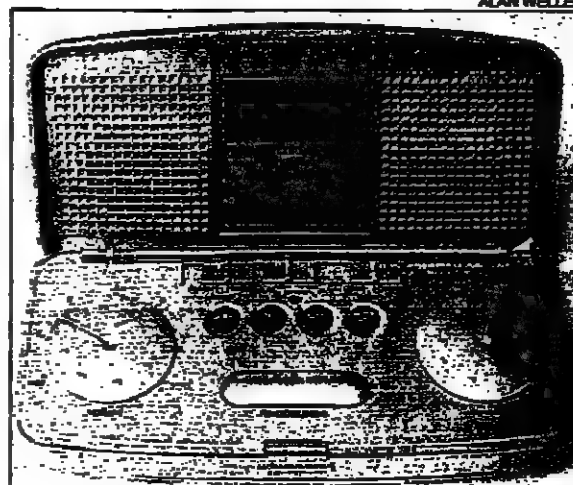
He has also published scholarly articles on the history of furniture, clocks and barometers as well as writing books on Ormolu, the work of Matthew Boulton, and English barometers 1680-1850.

Automata, he insists, should be viewed as works of art and not just novelties. "I don't know why there is this assumption that toys are only for children," he says, admiring a miniature that features a mouse taking a piece of cheese from a trap just before it snaps shut. "Some of these pieces are so delicate that you could not let children play with them very often — well, maybe only grown-up children."

MICHAEL CABLE

● Cabaret Mechanical Theatre, 32/34 The Market, Covent Garden, London WC2 (0171-379 7961). Open Mon-Sat, 10am-7pm, Sun 11am-7pm. Admission: £1.95 (children and students, £1.20)

WHEN YOU are travelling you can miss some luxuries, like waking up to the sound of music on the radio. Lenz's Voyageur is not only tiny, it also boasts an FM radio in stereo. Built into its own travelling box,



The tiny Voyageur radio is a marvel of stylish design

GADGETS

tinny side but is a marvel of design nonetheless. You also get an AM radio should decent FM stereo reception be too much to hope for wherever you lay your head.

Most of us carry a camera or camcorder with us when we go on holiday, but once you start adding secondary equipment like tripods you can quickly turn into a heavily-laden one-man film crew worthy of one of Michael Palin's globetrotters. Mini Stativ is a sensational flexible tripod just three inches high.

It is small enough to slip into the tiniest backpack yet robust enough to fix equipment for steady or timed shots.

TIM WAPSHOTT

● Lenz's Voyageur costs £39.99 from Business & Gifts Ltd (0172 376554 for stockists); Mini Stativ, £4.99 from The Leading Edge (0171-499 7891).

BARGAINS

There are bargains to be had all over the country. With £100, what would you buy?

FORREST & Co in London's East End specialises in auctioning household and office items on behalf of county courts and bailiffs.

Beside the polished chrome and velvet dining suites, and the nouveau ceramics, there is old mahogany furniture and other genuine antiques.

I bought a wicker laundry basket, a carved trunk and a quantity of theatrical ware (c. 1940) for £28; a small oak wardrobe for £10; 180 various CD singles for £18; an antique Persian carpet for £16; a Marconi Bakelite radio and a Bakelite telephone for £28.

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Bags of class

BRIEFCASES

IT HAS to be bomb-proof and beautiful; cool and stylish and totally practical: it has to be strong enough to carry the boring things, big enough to carry the important things and small enough to go through a revolving door without making you look ridiculous.

In short, it's tough being a briefcase. And with the variety of styles and designs available, it's getting tougher to choose one. The rule is you can have only one — a briefcase is not a handbag. Two briefcases says you are trying to impress the wrong people. Three is carelessness.

Black is safe: looks sharp beside a suit and won't raise

doubts about your reliability in bank-like circles. But black is the kiss-of-death for your carefully casual dress: down Friday look of tweed jacket, chinos and deck shoes. Brown is a tricky colour — there are browns and browns, and some of them are closer to yellow.

The colour rule is simple: if you can't spill an espresso on it without staining, the colour is too light. Any colour except black or brown and it's not a briefcase. It's some kind of rucksack.

So, you've agonised over the colour, now you must choose a style — and answer

another practical question: will you want to be able to sit on your briefcase? If the answer is yes, go for something rugged. But if you can generally find a chair, consider one of the soft-sided attaché-case briefcases.

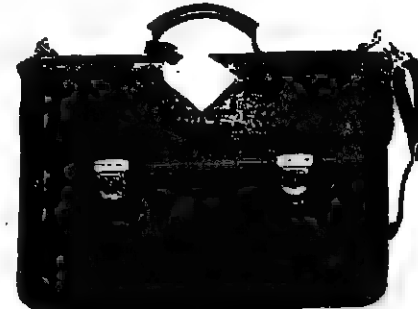
Material? You can choose from rubber, canvas, aluminium, nylon and good old-fashioned leather, which smells nice (an oft-forgotten virtue in crowded commuting conditions) and it just gets cooler and more beautiful with time, as it collects scuffs, scars and wrinkles — just like its owner.

ANGUS CLARK

Photographs: Des Jensen
Research: Jennifer Ridgberg



ABOVE: Mulberry's Riley briefcase, £350, in walnut leather, has separate compartments to maintain order, and a soft leather handle and shoulder strap (0171-491 4323)

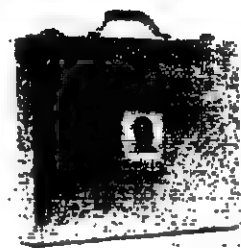


ABOVE: Black leather briefcase, £375, from Ermesiglo Zegna (0171-493 4471) with padded nylon strap and wooden nametag. Has two practical zip front-pockets



LEFT: Brown leather briefcase from Dr Martens, £110, for the tough young executive. Has two front closures and a shoulder strap (01933 419853)

BELOW: Mandarin Duck's Tank briefcase, £195, is made of rubber and canvas. It is lightweight, yet shockproof and has a detachable nylon shoulder strap. From The Conran Shop (0171-589 7401)



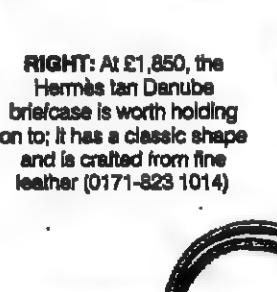
ABOVE: Paperchase's brushed aluminium portfolio, £75, looks very cool, and has a square photograph inset (0171-580 8498)



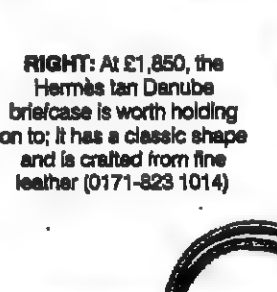
RIGHT: At £1,850, the Hermès tan Danube briefcase is worth holding on to; it has a classic shape and is crafted from fine leather (0171-823 1014)



ABOVE: Armani's black briefcase, £589, in shiny leather. At Harrods (0171-730 1234)



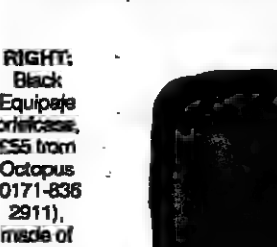
ABOVE: Black nylon briefcase, £13.50 from Paperchase (as above), has two compartments



ABOVE: Portfolio, £129, from Bric's UK in tan and brown leather. Includes a lock and shoulder strap (0171-824 2166)



ABOVE: Dark brown Louis Vuitton (0800 993304) briefcase, £710, with two compartments



RIGHT: Black Equipe briefcase, £55 from Octopus (0171-636 2911), made of vinyl with aluminium handle

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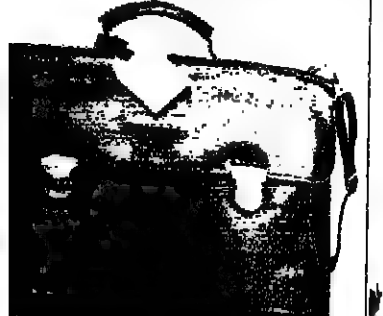
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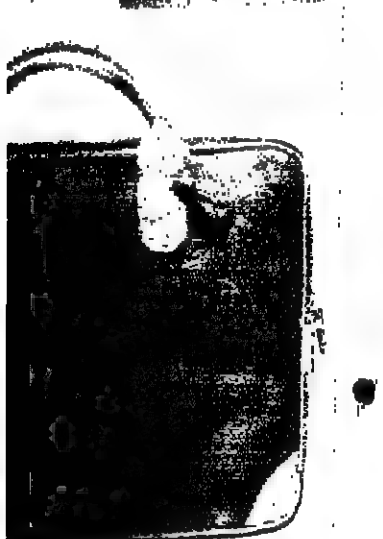
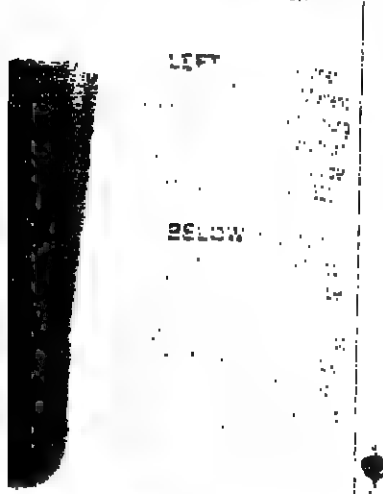
class

...the most important thing is to be comfortable. If the clothes are uncomfortable, you can't wear them. It's not just about the look, it's about the feel. The clothes should be soft, comfortable, and easy to wear. That's the key to a good wardrobe. It's not about having the latest fashion, it's about having clothes that make you feel good. That's the real class.

ANGUS CLARK
Drs. Jensen
Jennifer Ruggenberg



LEFT
BELOW



Softness is next to manliness



ABOVE: Fine-knit sweater, £185, Missoni, Browns; Harvey Nichols (0171-584 0011). Beige moleskin crop jacket, £59.99, River Island (0181-998 8822)

Katharine Hammett has a simple rule for judging the suitability of what a man is wearing. "All a girl has to ask is: 'Would I go to bed with a man who wears that?'"

Thankfully, she says, men's fashions this season are sexy. The minimalist looks that have defined the Nineties have infiltrated high-street stores, resulting in clothes that are simple, lean and sophisticated. They are sharp yet understated, cool but comfortable. And with men's shift in attitude towards grooming, helped by countless specialist magazines and style programmes, the quality of the clothes they buy has improved, too.

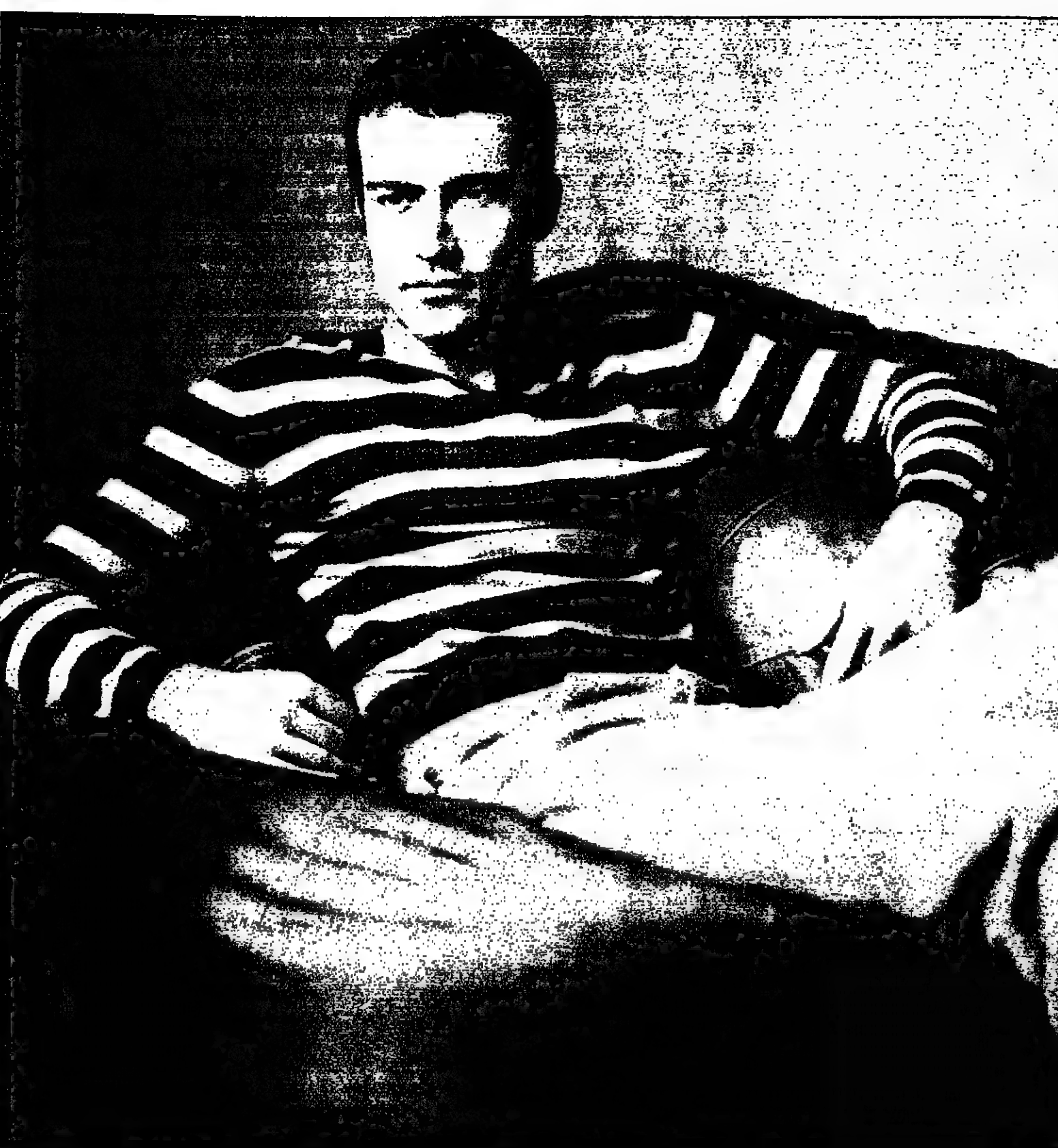
Current casualwear is a far cry from the Eighties, when the only males who wore crew-necks were advertising execs and film crews. Even for smart occasions, every man can now get away with a flat-fronted pair of trousers and shirt — or, even better, a piece of classic knitwear.

Knitwear was an essential element at the men's autumn/winter shows. There were round-necks, V-necks, crew-necks and sloppy sweaters, worn with a varied mix of textures — leather, moleskin, pinstripes and indigo denim.

Although most were delicately coloured — stone grey, chocolate, midnight blue and black — designers such as Missoni, John Rocha, Nicole Farhi and Clements Ribeiro paraded wild patterns and stripes in bold hues such as ochre, lime green, tangerine and turquoise.

The choice of men's knitwear has expanded considerably from lambswool, Aran and cashmere. As Hammett says: "Today you can get the same style in cashmere or Wensleydale, a super-fine weave or a heavy knit."

This means that it is not only golfers who are seen in their diamond patterns and



ABOVE: Chocolate, beige and rust fine-knit sweater, £105, Katharine Hammett, SW1 (0171-823 1002). Stone moleskin jeans, £29.99, River Island (0181-998 8822). ABOVE RIGHT: Angora sweater, £275, Nigel Curtis, Browns (0171-491 7833); Camel cotton jeans, £150, Helmut Lang, Browns and Harvey Nichols (0171-584 0011). RIGHT: Animal-print sweater, £155, Elliot, Browns, as before. Dark brown moleskin jacket, £100, and matching trousers, £49.99, River Island, as before

stripes. Most fine knitwear is soft and stylish enough to wear on its own.

To complement the urban man's lifestyle, there are ribby tank-tops and tight fine weaves from labels such as Missoni, or crew-necks from Nicole Farhi; the country man can choose from either Joseph's zip-up cardigan or heavier knits from Burberry, whose Blues label includes several in shades of denim.

Although most of the styles are classic and tight-fitting, you don't have to be an Adonis to wear them. Under a jacket or worn loosely with a pair of jeans, the new breed of knits gives every man a hard-edged, Nineties appeal which is cool. And, as Katharine Hammett points out, sexy.

LISA GRAINGER

Photographs by Richard Burns and Chris Harris
Grooming by Sally Kvalheim for Jo Hansford (0171-963 2236)
Styling by Amanda Uppl



LEFT: Khaki, dark green and blue sweater, £120, Katharine Hammett, as before. Deep blue jeans, £100, Byblos, Harrods, SW1 (0171-730 1234)

ABOVE: Multicoloured striped cashmere sweater, £385, Clements Ribeiro, Browns, as before

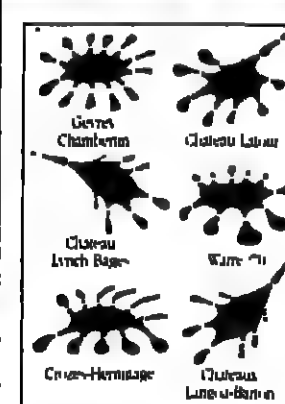
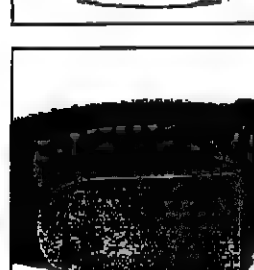
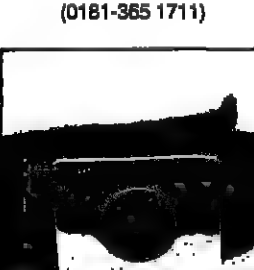
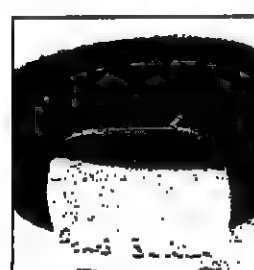


THREE OF A KIND

No hard-edged Nineties look is complete without a leather belt with a simple metal buckle — I.G.

RIGHT: Black leather, silver square-buckle belt, £50, Paul Smith, WC2 (0171-379 7133). BELOW RIGHT: Black calf leather belt with GA buckle, £89, Giorgio Armani, SW1 (0171-235 6232).

BELOW: Black leather, silver square cut-out buckle belt, £37.50, from a selection, Otto Glanz, Harrods, SW1 (0181-365 1711).



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THE NEXT HOME IMPROVEMENT

'Although my son's birthday falls at roughly the same time every year, it always comes as the most tremendous surprise to me'

My son and I are just about to embark upon our seventh year of life together (eighth, really, I suppose, if you count, as I tend to, *The Time He Spent Inside*), and it occurs to me that after all these years I have still not learnt to look any further into the future than the next minute.

The lack of this useful skill has certainly contributed to the thwarting of my life's ambitions (I was at college with a fellow who was admirably rumoured to have his entire career mapped out in easily achievable stages on a flow-chart, whatever that may be). Over the years I have failed successfully to become a ballet dancer, a veterinary surgeon, a simultaneous translator, an academic and a biographer.

But despite this fearful catalogue of missed opportunity, it is in life with Alexander that my inability to anticipate is still most shamefully visible: Good gracious, I seem to be expecting a baby. Crikey, what is that stabbing pain in my middle? Oh, I see, now I am *having* the baby. Crash. Oh, look, he has learnt to crawl. Sizzle. And get his finger quite a long way inside the electric socket.

And now, blow me down, his birthday

has come round again. This event, though it falls at roughly the same time every year, always comes as the most tremendous surprise to me. About a week beforehand, when the postman starts delivering immense jiffy bags full of lavish presents from comparative strangers, I suddenly realise that I have made no preparations of any kind, and fall into a useless frenzy of guilt and self-reproach because I am a terrible mother with a heart of stone.

It was easier when he was tiny. In those days, I would buy a large quantity of champagne, and make an airy sponge cake with a candle in the middle of it, and invite my friends round. We would sit around the Moses basket, consuming the cake and the champagne and admiring the infant sleeping sweetly in his Bonpoint pyjamas. No pass the parcel, no party bags full of disgusting lollipops. No one threw up because they had eaten too much cake, and only one or two of them burst into tears at the end because

they were tired and wanted to go home. But then, while he was still in nappies, the spectre of the children's party began to haunt me. Little moppets with legs too wobbly to hold them upright would send Alexander engraved invitations to come and celebrate their anniversaries. And so we would take ourselves off to spend a couple of hours in a cavernous drawing-room where, amid hideous wails of terror and dismay from the infant guests, magicians and clowns would turn up in motley garb and do their squeaky voices and make their jokes and pull rabbits out of the birthday girl's tiny ear.

The organisation and expense of these

LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

occasions exceeded by far anything that Caligula could have devised. I thought they were perfectly horrible, and said so to Jessica, whom I had known rather well in the years when we were both childfree and had social lives, and had reckoned to be a kindred spirit.

"I am simply not going to participate in this absurd cargo system, where Sybil has to have live elephants at her party because Georgie had fire-eaters at his, and Sophie's mummy is flying over the Moscow State Circus for the afternoon to perform in a marquee in the back garden. It is vile and ridiculous and... and *unintelligent*," said I, voice rising to a self-righteous shriek.

"OK," said Jessica, coolly. "But if you aren't going to join in, you can't accept the invitations, can you? And then what will Alexander do about friends?"

Oh dear. Because I am *farouche* and, in fact, more or less unsocialised, this aspect of things had not occurred to me. So here I was, about to deprive my poor child of friends, make his schooldays miserable and probably condemn him to spend his adult life as an ornamental hermit — all on some Cromwellian point of principle. The fact that Alexander himself was not, as a toddler, much of a party animal and, when taken to some jolly kiddies' gathering, would look austere around the assembled munchkins and say, loudly and with evident distaste, "I think all these children should go home now," simply made things worse. Obviously, a party would have to be held.

Only, what sort of party? Our house was custom-built, as far as I can tell, for a family of early 19th-century midgees.

There are two rooms up, and two down, and three people constitutes a crowd in any of them. Even if I were to hire Mr E, the arrestingly-named entertainer who seems to have the children's party market pretty well sewn up in our area, he and his funny balloons would fill up the drawing room all by themselves. The children would have to watch from outside, through the front window. As for marquees in the garden — the only kind of circus we could comfortably accommodate in our diminutive patch is a circus of performing fleas.

As I said to Linda, in a hopeless sort of way. What am I to do? She let me swing in the wind long enough to make me resolve that for next year, I would book a London bus, and start assembling party bags 12 months in advance. And then she took charge. Which is why you will find me, next Wednesday afternoon, patrolling Kid-dies Corner in my Darth Vader outfit (Alexander wanted me to go as Princess Leia, but I can't get my hair to do that thing over the ears) prodding with my light sabre any little child who seems not to be enjoying himself...

GILL ALLEN

Mother's dilemma: whose son is he?

After my son was born in 1994 there was a blank space on his birth certificate under "Name of father". I knew emotionally and irrationally who his father was, but I did not know with scientific certainty and, rather than simply insert my husband's name into the empty space, I embarked on the daunting process of acquiring proof of who the real father was.

Caroline Bridgewood on the pain and uncertainty of not knowing who your child's father is

dramatic rise in the number of women who do not name a father when they register their child's birth: more than a quarter of a million during the past five years. There is no information about the number of women who take this course because they do not know the identity of the father, but it is likely to be significant.

Given the complex and fluid nature of modern family life, this is not surprising. Relationships are short-lived and fidelity even more so. Couples can opt for separation to deal with their problems and then reunite: women can opt for single parenthood as a positive choice.

When my marriage started to fall and I became unhappy, I drifted into a relationship



Caroline Bridgewood didn't know who was the father of Little Titus — her husband or her lover. She confessed, and divorced. A paternity test later answered her question

with a man who made me happy. Then I became pregnant unexpectedly and was faced with one of life's most difficult moral dilemmas: should I say nothing and let everyone assume that the child was my husband's, or should I own up and face the consequences?

After four months of acute anxiety, sleeplessness and the worst physical stress I have ever known, compounded by severe morning sickness, I owned up.

My husband and I separated and subsequently divorced. My lover and I also went our separate ways, although not until after our son was born.

I was astonished by the criticism I encountered for going public. "Shut up and don't rock the boat: that way you'll hurt fewer people" was the most frequent piece of advice. It seemed I was going against a long-standing precedent of social behaviour.

In his controversial book *Sperm Wars* (Fourth Estate, 1996), the biologist Robin Banks confirms that, although the female subconscious is programmed to find the optimal genetic material for her offspring, it is also programmed to provide the optimal rearing conditions for them, and this may involve them being raised by someone other than their biological parent. In allowing this to happen, we are getting a better evolutionary and dynamic "result" and avoiding what Banks calls "the disadvantages of infidelity".

This evolutionary need seems to have been built into our morality: none of the women I know who have faced my dilemma have chosen to come clean, and there are more of them that you might expect. The unfaithful, like the poor, are always with us.

Hilarly, a successful and independent businesswoman who became pregnant on the cusp of two relationships, trusted to luck that her son would turn out to be the offspring of her new husband, and, judging by their strong physical likeness, her gamble seems to have paid off. Sarah, the wife of a landowner and for whom divorce would have caused an inheritance nightmare, stayed mum in the face of gossip about the striking resemblance between her youngest child and her constant male companion during the summer before her daughter was born.

Alison, another businesswoman, who was pursuing an affair while trying to conceive

with her husband, hoped for a little "accident" because she was convinced that her lover's offspring would be more attractive than her husband's.

The sister-in-law of another acquaintance was finally found out and is now divorced, but only after an affair lasting seven years and two children fathered by her lover.

Concealing non-paternity is a risky strategy. Better for the marriage, perhaps, but disastrous for the mother-child relationship, which becomes based on a dangerous and potentially devastating lie. And one she might have to keep up for ever.

Every child must be registered within six weeks of its birth, hence the blank space

on Titus's original birth certificate. I had insisted on a formal test for paternity, but this did not take place until he was seven weeks old.

Blood samples are required from father, mother and child, and we opted to be "done" together, making a ghoul-like little family outing to the phlebotomy department of a nearby hospital.

Five weeks later, the result arrived in the form of a letter from a commercial diagnostic laboratory, which can rule out a potential father but not absolutely rule one in. Instead of a "yes" or "no", there was a statistic: the probability of my lover not being the father of my son was four million to one.

My reaction was simple

relief. I could now tell the world what I had suspected since Titus's ultrasound scan, when I saw his father's profile in miniature. I was able to re-register his birth with a full entry, and was reassured by the registrar that this was a more common occurrence than I had imagined.

Knowing the truth has not changed our outward circumstances for the better, nor is paternity testing a process that can be gone through without at best discomfort, and at worst, pain. But my bright, healthy, affectionate and charming son compensates for all the anguish. And so does the knowledge that I will have told him the truth.

Names have been changed.

THE TEST

There are a handful of laboratories offering paternity testing, some handling about 10,000 cases a year (and numbers are rising). Your GP can tell you the nearest. You contact the laboratory direct to arrange for forms to be completed and blood taken. A passport photograph of all parties is required. The cost is about £500 for testing mother, baby and putative father. A report is sent two to three weeks after the test.

For further information, contact Customer Services at Cellmark Diagnostics on 01235 528609.

CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE FACED THE LOVE CHILD PROBLEM



The heiress Sita White with her four-year-old daughter Tyrian



Imran Khan: had refused a blood test



Putative fathers: Sylvester Stallone and Tom Jones

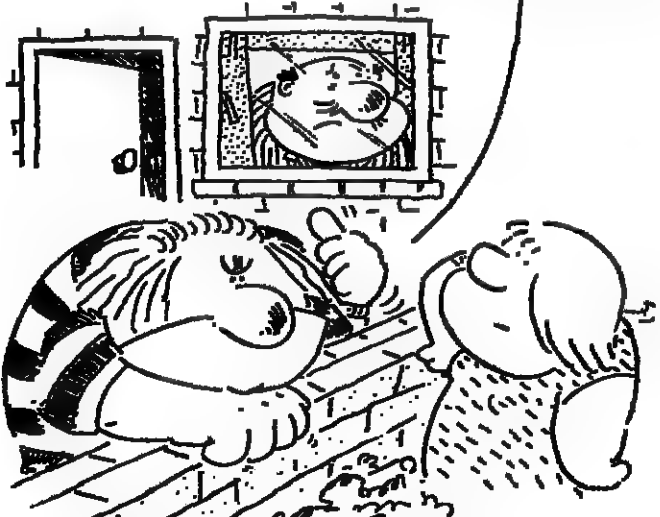


Sir Paul McCartney: denied fathering a child

A BLOOD test could reveal whether Imran Khan, the former Pakistani cricketer, is the father of Sita White's daughter Tyrian, but he has recently admitted paternity.

Tests showed that Sylvester Stallone was not the father of his girlfriend's baby. Blood tests proved that the singer Tom Jones was "almost conclusively" the father of a love child. Paul McCartney was sued in 1984 by Bettina Huchey, 21, who said she was his daughter. The case was dismissed.

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SEVEN SEAS

Family life the ocean v



Jeffrey Archer lives in a magnificent two-storey penthouse with views of the Thames

Elevated to the high life

Celebrities enjoy the security and privacy of a penthouse — and the stunning views, says Christine Webb

When Ringo Starr bought a penthouse flat in Chelsea as his London perch earlier this year, he was following a trend in celebrity lifestyles. A penthouse offers wonderful views, generous living space and, most important of all for a celebrity, privacy. Most also have secure underground parking from which the owner can walk to a lift and press a priority button which ensures he is whisked up to his floor without stopping.

Football Club, is reported to be moving into a new penthouse built on the team's home ground at Stamford Bridge. In June, Spice Girl Mel B was said to have fallen in love with a penthouse apartment in The Village, Battersea, but lost out even though she made an offer on the £575,000 three-bedroom flat. She is since said to have fallen for Michael Caine's £2 million Oxfordshire mansion.



Tall storeys help you rise above it all: Michael Caine, left, has a flat in a high-rise block at Chelsea Harbour

There is good news for those who want to go up in the world: the number of penthouses in London is also rising, as developers with an eye to the premiums they command are adding new ones to the top of existing blocks of both flats and offices. The most expensive of these are at Fountain House in Park Lane, Mayfair, where four substantial apartments were built on top of an existing block, the final one of which has just been sold through Wetherell for £4.5 million. First Penthouse has come up with a nifty way of hoisting an extra prefabricated floor on top of blocks of offices or flats



five penthouses to Albert Court, next to the Albert Hall, which will be completed next year. These apartments, which have CCTV security plus porterage, are about £1.8 million through Knight Frank and Hamptons International.

Another development is at St John's Wood Court, opposite Lord's cricket ground, where the company has built three penthouses and is adding another four. The first will be ready for occupation by Christmas, priced at £795,000, plus £30,000 for a parking space. Michael Wilson, architect

and developer, has used a similar idea at Parkview Court, building 13 luxury penthouses, three of them duplex, on top of a five-storey mansion block on the southern end of the Fulham Road. One is still available through Hamptons at £300,000. Galliard Homes has been adding floors to existing London warehouse and office blocks for four years, and in September released for sale 24 penthouses on the new eleventh and twelfth floors of the old Shell building in Lambeth, which it is calling the White House. All have terraces, and the flats range in price from £530,000 to £1.5 million. Here,

PENTHOUSES FOR SALE

THE PENTHOUSE at 3a Palace Green, Kensington, is 3,600 glossy square feet of marble floor space, including a cinema room, on the seventh and eighth floors of a 1990s block. It has panoramic views across Kensington Palace and Kensington Gardens. It is on the market at £5.9 million through Strutt & Parker and Knight Frank. The service charges alone are £38,504 a year.

Views right over London are to be enjoyed from a penthouse on the fifth and sixth floors of the former Mount Vernon Hospital, Hampstead, which is being sold by Knight Frank at £2.1 million.

Hug queues lined up for the new flats available at the White House, the former Shell headquarters on the South Bank, and now Galliard Homes (0181-508 8881) is offering a 2,000 square foot duplex penthouse at £1.5 million.

Penthouse 6, Bickenhall Mansions, Bickenhall Street, Marylebone, offers four bedrooms and two reception rooms with excellent views towards Regent's Park. Plaza Estates (0171-724 3100) is seeking £1.3 million for it.

A penthouse designed by Piers Gough in Soho, Soho, has panoramic views of St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster, and a roof terrace big enough to contain a potted garden. Knight Frank is selling it at £1.25 million.

A three-bedroom duplex penthouse at Jacob's Island, Butler's Wharf, is right on the Thames. Berkeley Homes (01959 561499) is selling it for £1 million.

The principal penthouse at Dunbar Wharf in Limehouse takes up the top two floors of a modern apartment block, and has a spectacular octagonal living room opening on to a roof terrace giving almost 360-degree views of the river and London. Offers exceeding £1 million are being sought by Fairbairn Homes (01753 655375).

The Angel on the Green, a new development in Islington, will be topped by four penthouses, the principal one being 2,800 square feet with a roof garden. Downstairs in the new block of 84 apartments built by Grove Manor Homes (0171-359 5259) is a gym, swimming pool and a restaurant.



Raising the roof add an extra floor in 12 hours

offices have been transformed into 397 apartments. "As long as there are lifts, the higher you go in a block, the more expensive the apartments," says Roy Conway of Galliard. "There are no problems adding on to existing buildings so long as you do it at the same time as converting the rest of the building, otherwise you delay occupation on the lower floors."

The company has built a floor atop Great Jubilee Wharf as well, for around £540,000. This is an 18th-century warehouse it is converting at Wapping Wall, where four penthouses have been created, all of which have roof terraces

and river views. It has also added just one magnificent penthouse to the Little Adelphi building, near Covent Garden, which it has converted from offices into flats. The penthouse has double doors leading on to terraces and is marketed at about £1.85 million by De Groot Collis.

Avril Butt, a spokeswoman for the company, says: "There are very few proper penthouses, by which I mean a top-floor flat with good views, a roof terrace on which to laze, some good ceiling heights which may allow for galleried space, and floor-to-ceiling windows. Celebrities love them because they offer privacy and anonymity. When we do get good penthouses they tend to sell quickly."

Goldschmidt and Howland, Hampstead, is selling a penthouse that was once occupied by Peter Sellers. The £495,000 two-bed apartment is at Northwood Lodge, in Oakhill Park, just west of Hampstead village. It tops a luxurious block and despite being only six floors up, its large terrace offers such wonderful views across London that it might be on top of the world.

Goldschmidt and Howland (0171-435 4404); Hamptons (0171-586 9995); Knight Frank (0171-620 8171); Galliard Homes (0181-508 8881); Wetherell (0171-463 6935).

OXFORD - Boars Hill Price Guide: £295,000
An attractive house with a delightful 180 foot mature garden and far reaching views. There is planning for a first floor extension, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 reception rooms, kitchen and utility/cloakroom.
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AIRLIE GARDENS, W8. Freehold Share: £1,300,000
An immaculate lateral conversion across the 1st floors of 2 period buildings with splendid west facing views over communal gardens. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 reception rooms, kitchen, utility, balcony, lift and parking space. About 247.5 sq ft (2,664 sq ft). Joint Sole Agents: JOHN D WOOD & CO 0171 727 0705 & HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL 0171 937 9371

HERTFORDSHIRE - Moor Park Baker Street 25 mins
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CAMBRIDGE STREET, SW1.
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BELGRAVIA OFFICE: 0171 730 9834

SURREY - Esher Price Guide: £525,000
A double fronted house with a south facing garden and good communications to London. 6 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 4 reception rooms, kitchen, office/study, 2 garages, swimming pool, changing room with sauna, shower and WC. Joint Sole Agents: HEAD OFFICE: 0171 493 4106 & HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL: 01372 468411

PRINCE OF WALES DRIVE, SW11. Lease to 2972: £340,000
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BATTERSEA OFFICE: 0171 228 0174

EAST SUSSEX - Forest Row Price Guide: £435,000
Set within Ashdown Forest, a charming stone cottage with a delightful 1/2 acre garden. 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 reception rooms, kitchen and garaging.
EAST GRINSTEAD: 01342 326326

A good bet for millionaires

Susan Sangster tells Rachel Kelly how she went from pillar to post to turn her house into a fitting home for a family

When Robert and Susan Sangster bought their seven-bedroom house in Holland Park, west London, four years ago for about £3 million, it was a developer's delight — but hardly the ideal family home.

The essentials were in place — 20ft high ceilings, good proportions, and a basement swimming pool — but, in characteristic developer overkill, there were extra pillars in the drawing room, double doors, and far too many chandeliers for Mrs Sangster's understated style.

She knew what was needed to make it a suitable home for her three children and husband Robert, the millionaire racehorse enthusiast, whose father Vernon founded the football pools company. Copies of the *Bloodstock Breeder's Annual Review* are on display in a glass-fronted cabinet in the drawing room.

"The house wasn't to my taste when we bought it," Mrs Sangster says. "I wanted it to be almost like a house in the country."

A year of building and redecoration followed, with the help of the decorator Nina Campbell. "I liked her. I thought she would be very easy to work with — and she was. She made me feel as though the house was mine," Mrs Sangster says. "I thought she wouldn't take the whole house over, and she didn't. For example, if we were choosing fabrics, I might say, 'I liked a particular pattern, and she would say, 'well perhaps this would be even better'."

The ground floor of the house, on the market for £8 million, has a creamy yellow drawing room to the left, knocked through to the back of the house, and a dining room to the right. The floor is covered in steel matting.

covered by muted, patterned floral rugs in shades of green, pink, black and beige, bought at auction. The rugs proved the starting point for the drawing room's decorating scheme.

"I wanted it to be the sort of room you could put your feet



Racehorse owner Robert Sangster and wife Susan have put their seven-bedroom house in London's Holland Park on the market at £8 million

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

up in, and it to not feel too formal." There are comfortable sofas and occasional tables smothered in glamorous family pictures.

Across the hall is a dining room lined in midnight blue Benetton fabric. "I always knew it was only going to be used in the evening, so I decided I would make a virtue of using a dark colour," Mrs Sangster says.

Her favourite room is her *toilet de jour* papered blue-and-white bathroom on the first floor next door to her blue-and-white bedroom, once a dark green billiard room with all the trimmings. The first floor has been given over to a series of interconnecting bedrooms, bathrooms and dressing rooms.

"I've got a television in one of the bedrooms and bath-



Day at the races: Robert and Susan Sangster at Ascot

Mrs Sangster: The bath is in the centre of the room, there is a beautiful fireplace, and the walls are lined with pale cream wooden cupboards, with matching fabric behind chicken wire.

Upstairs is a floor of country-style spare bedrooms and bath-

rooms, bottles of Evian and Hildown to the ready, apart from one room that has become Mrs Sangster's gym, with her exercise schedule on the wall. There is plenty of sophisticated, understated chintz and some nice wooden beds. The top floor hosts the nursery, and there are some elegant staff bedrooms.

A lift whisks visitors to the basement, where the Sangsters have made the most profound structural changes. The kitchen was entirely repiped; now it is a cosy affair on the street side of the house, complete with an Aga.

The utility rooms were tucked under the pavement in what were originally coal holes when the house was built in 1890, and the former utility rooms made into a breakfast room. The changing rooms were re-seized.

"There didn't seem much point to have changing rooms when our bedrooms were upstairs," Mrs Sangster says. "Oh, and I blocked in the wall to the pool, as no one likes being watched when they are swimming."

There is a playroom leading to the small garden at the



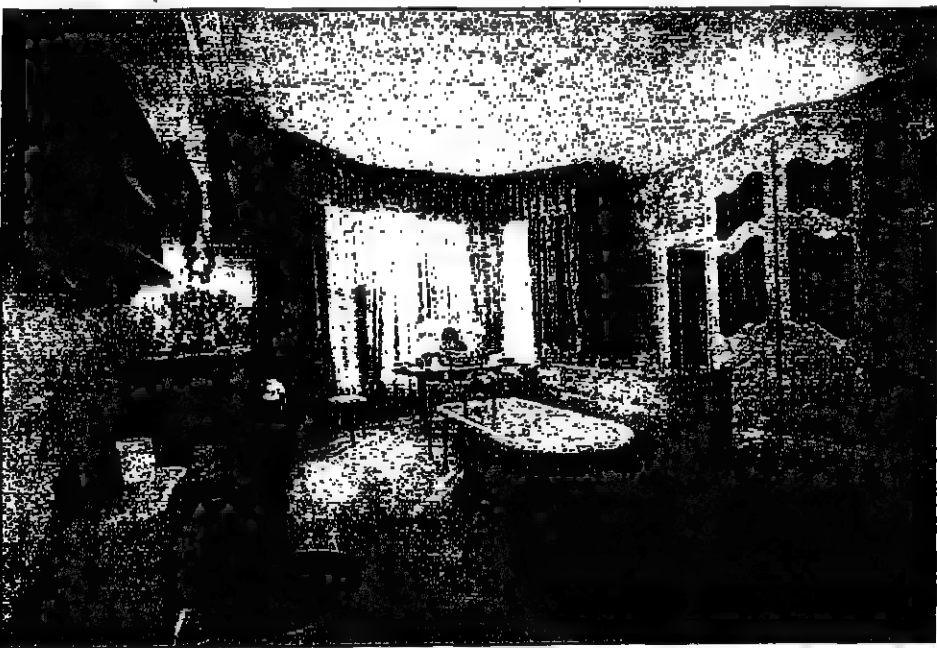
Floating asset: the secluded basement swimming pool

back, but then the Sangsters also own a country house.

The only disappointment of their London abode is the rather musty, rather small swimming pool. "Yes, that room does need decoration," Mrs Sangster admits. And there is no garage, usually a must at this level in the market.

The couple are looking for a Knightsbridge house more convenient for Mr Sangster's office. Mrs Sangster sighs: "I am sad to be leaving."

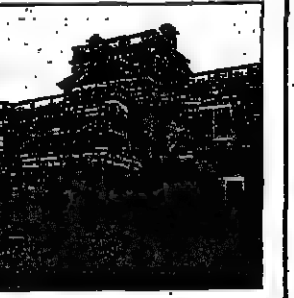
Agents: Knight Frank, Kensington office (0171-938 4311)



An abundance of natural light makes a long, hot soak in this bath a particular luxury

RICH PICKINGS AT A GALLOP

Stan Clarke, chairman of Newcastle and Uttoxeter race courses and rags-to-riches millionaire, bought £5 million Dunstall Hall, Staffs (right), in June. He had his first job, as a plumber, at the Grade II listed, ten-bedroom house, which is set in 1,000 acres.



Sheik Al Maktoum, the oil-rich ruler of Dubai and racehorse owner, has a 60-bed, near Newmarket racecourse. The £50 million property, built in 1992, overlooks the trainers' track and includes a gymnasium, swimming pool and cinema.

Claire Tomlinson, the leading women's polo player, plans to return to her Georgian farmhouse near Tetbury, Gloucestershire (right) in the next few weeks. The ten-bedroom, £750,000 property, with stabling, was destroyed by fire last year and has since been rebuilt.



MARKET COMMENT

FOR WEALTHY international buyers who may not be especially familiar with London but know a prime address when they see one, Holland Park is a perfect hunting ground.

In terms of typical priorities, the area offers a wide choice of family homes, good schools and the leafy delights of Holland Park, with Kensington Gardens still within Dalmatian-walking distance. Add to that easy access to the West End and City via the underground's Central Line, a short run out to Heathrow airport — and you begin to smell serious money.

The 19th-century double-fronted villas on Holland Park itself (Addison Road and Holland Villas Road) are among the largest houses in central London, with prices and cachet to match.

They range from 6,000 to 12,000 sq ft (Notting Hill, in contrast, boasts little more than 4,000 sq ft), and on the rare occasions that they come up for sale, can command anything from £5 million (needing attention) to £8 million.

"As Roddy Craggs of agent Knight Frank puts it: 'There are probably no more than 20 people in London at any one time looking for that kind of house. Only two or three of these homes come up in a year, and they don't suit all

needs.' But their rarity ensures a 'waiting list'."

Part of the attraction is the sheer expanse of ground they cover. In a city where space has always been at a premium, some have been split horizontally into vast "mansions", which still fetch £2 to £2.5 million.

"LATERAL living is big news at the moment," says Rupert Fisher of Foxtons. In comparison, the tall, narrow houses north of Holland Park Avenue, on, for example, Portland Road and Queensdale Road, are "more suited for professional couples than families because they often only have small patio gardens and prac-

tically every room is on a different floor". Prices there for three bedrooms, two bathrooms and an abundance of entertaining space range from £650,000 to £1.25 million.

Don't even think about Holland Park houses unless you have £500,000 to spend. That might buy you a small mews property, or a brick-fronted family home in the 1960s Woodford Square development — "very good value but not perceived as architecturally beautiful", according to Mr Craggs.

PRICES slip to the north of Holland Park towards North Kensington, around Sirdar Road and St Ann's Road, where you can buy a modernised two-bedroom Victorian terraced house with a garden for as little as £225,000; a four-bedroom house would set you back about £425,000.

The area to the west, bordering Brook Green around Elsham Road, is also good value. Here, a two-bedroom garden flat with a 60ft garden can be had from £180,000, as opposed to £350,000 a little further east in Holland Park — and you get a residents' parking permit for Kensington and Chelsea, says Rupert Fisher of Foxtons.

FAITH GLASGOW

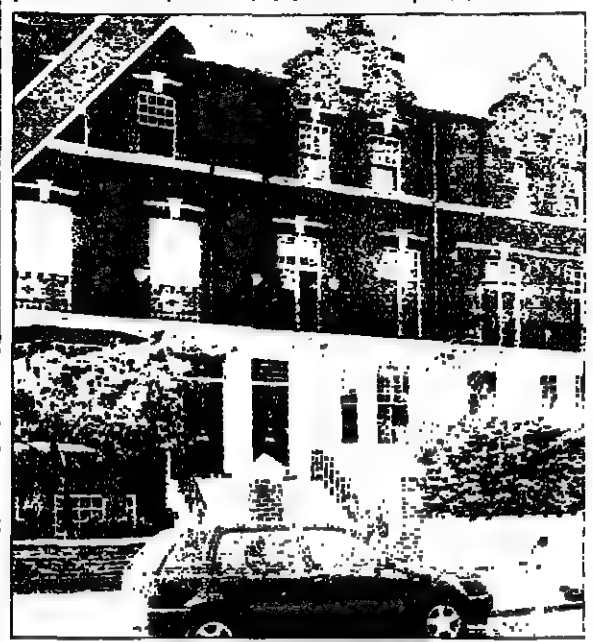
HOME SWAP

BUYERS PRICED out of Chelsea in west London are looking south of the river in Battersea for better value. Demand for five or six-bedroom Victorian terraced houses around Battersea Park, costing from £350,000 to £750,000, forced prices up 37 per cent in the first half of this year, says estate agent Douglas and Gordon. But with more property on the market, purchasers are no longer prepared to pay inflated prices and values have levelled off.

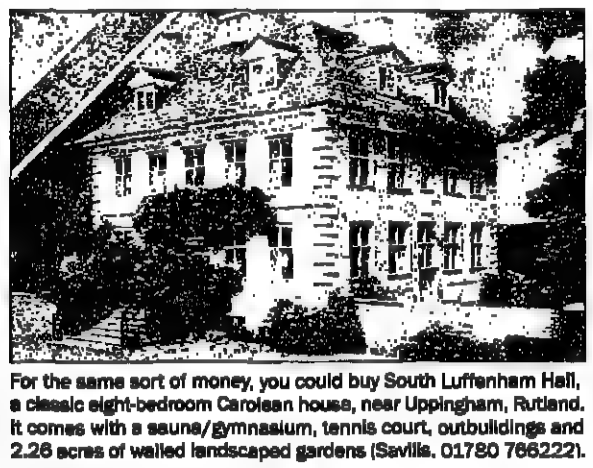
A shortage of good country houses in Lancashire, within commuting distance of Manchester and Liverpool, is keeping prices high, according to Smith Hodgkinson McGinty. Fashionable areas include Longridge, Parbold and Ormskirk, with easy access to the M6 and Manchester airport, where a six-bedroom Georgian rectory in five acres would set you back around £400,000.

Stone cottages in the Forest of Bowland are popular second homes, costing from £80,000 for three bedrooms. With Peterborough only 45 minutes by fast train from King's Cross and a clutch of good schools, Rutland, England's smallest county, is attracting London buyers looking for family homes.

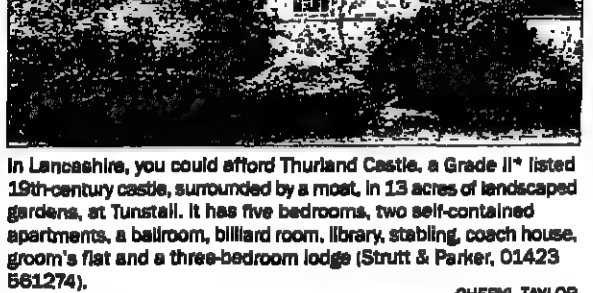
Stonebuilt houses, with up to five bedrooms, costing from £350,000, in villages around Rutland Water and the market towns of Oakham, Uppingham and Dundle, are highly sought-after, despite price gains of 15 per cent this year, says Savills. Large country houses in fox-hunting country around the Vale of Belvoir are also in demand, priced from £500,000 for six bedrooms and up to ten acres.



This five-bedroom Victorian terraced house, with a self-contained one-bedroom basement flat, situated by Albert Bridge with views over Battersea Park, has a price tag of £1.2 million (John D Wood, 02171-228 0174).



For the same sort of money, you could buy South Luffenham Hall, a classic eight-bedroom Georgian house, near Uppingham, Rutland. It comes with a sauna/gymnasium, tennis court, outbuildings and 2.26 acres of walled landscaped gardens (Savills, 01780 766222).



In Lancashire, you could afford Thurland Castle, a Grade II* listed 15th-century castle, surrounded by a moat, in 13 acres of landscaped gardens, at Tunstall. It has five bedrooms, two self-contained apartments, a ballroom, billiard room, library, stabling, coach house, groom's flat and a three-bedroom lodge (Strutt & Parker, 01423 561274).

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CHANGING TIMES

'A swift change in the lottery rules is needed if conservationists are to make the most of the handouts'

The story that follows is happening on my own doorstep, but I would bet my last lottery ticket that it is also happening somewhere near you. It is a tale of dreams come true, magic wands being waved and wishes granted and it all ending in tears.

I have always been a great supporter of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, indeed all county-based wildlife trusts which derive their income from membership fees, fundraising, and modest help from English Nature. Of all conservation groups, they view the landscape with a breadth of vision that more narrowly focused (and richer) charities seem unable to achieve. They do not consider only birds, mammals, the butterflies or the buttercups in isolation but the whole lot of them. Which has to be good news, if you happen to be a hairy but rare spider who has none of the beguiling qualities to elevate you to having a tea-towel marketing scheme dedicated to your survival.

So, over the past couple of years it has been with great delight that I picked up the local newspaper to learn that our wildlife trust, among others, has been on

Why payouts don't always pay off

the receiving end of some very nice lottery handouts. The total so far is about £1 million, destined to help in the construction of education centres and the purchasing of valuable and endangered sites from under the noses of developers or acquisitive farmers.

Good stuff, you might say. Alas, not so. Along with many others, our wildlife trust is now finding that, although a lottery handout may appear to be a blessing from heaven, it brings a hell of a lot of problems.

For a start, supporters who might have trudged along to a fundraising coffee morning or jumble sale now believe that the few pence they spend is insignificant compared with the huge sums awarded by the lottery, so they no longer bother. Members fail to renew subscriptions, thankful that the lottery has taken over responsibility for the wildlife, and so they need not bother. In our county, donations

are down 25 per cent. It is much the same everywhere.

It gets worse. The money is not necessarily helping the trusts achieve what they were set up to do: conserve nature in all its forms. Our local director, Derek Moore, warns: "We are in danger of creating thousands of white elephants."

White elephants, of course, are one type of wildlife whose survival and prolific breeding is never endangered in Britain. Let me explain how they are born, of public money and limited thought.

It is not always understood, even by some wildlife trust supporters, that mere

DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

grazed, for example, which requires it to be fenced, livestock brought in and cared for, access for walkers to be arranged, vandals to be discouraged, neighbours to be negotiated with, weeds to be mown, chemicals avoided. Do none of these

things and you have an overgrown mess, and it will not be long before the first rusty bedstead or broken fridge appears over the fence.

It is not the ownership of the water meadow which will keep it as we wish to see it — and the way the flora and fauna prefer it — but a regular input of labour, both behind a desk in the office and on the land itself.

And this is where the lottery lets wildlife down badly. And why, if there is not a swift change in the rules, much of the money handed out with the best of intentions for conservation will fund nothing more exciting than shabby tracts of countryside in the new millennium.

The problem has been pointed out many times, not least by the performing arts. The lottery is unable, because of its rules, to pay anyone's wages. It can fund

capital projects, such as buying land, but the money cannot be used to employ someone to look after it. "All the money we get," Mr Moore explained to me, "rebounds on the staff. They have more to manage but we have no money to employ any more people to help them. As well as being able to buy the land, we need a framework in which we can keep it going."

I am not certain how it came to be that lottery money should never be allowed into workers' pockets. But who would object nowadays, especially in Mr Blair's people-centred Britain?

Would anyone really complain if it were widely known that the owl warden down at Buttercup Fen was paid for out of lottery money, instead of drawing the dole? If it needed a shepherd to husband a flock of grazing sheep, would you really mind if part of the money was spent on paying him or her?

Nobody is asking for more of the lottery money; just a stroke of the pen, so that wildlife trusts can spend it more sensibly. Otherwise it is like buying a car and flatly refusing to pay for the petrol.

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters, of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1, Pall Mall, London W1K 1RF. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.

Bang goes the old sport

Marcus Scriven reports on the fast-changing world of the corporate shoot



The aim is a satisfying bag

A few years after perfecting the art of the company takeover, and many years on from his childhood in the East End of London, the late Charlie Clore was invited to shoot at Blenheim. On the appointed day, things went well enough, until Clore sent a message to his host ("Bert", the 10th Duke of Marlborough). Would it be possible, Clore asked, for his instructor, a retired major who was acting as a loader, to lunch with the guns rather than the beaters?

"Teaching Clore to eat as well, is he?" Marlborough muttered in response.

A generation on, Clore might have felt more at ease with the new breed of businessmen at shoots. "I have seen one instance of a big deal being done in between two grouse drives," says a north country landowner. "This chap was selling his milk business for more than £20 million. It went through on the moor."

Once disdained by Clore and his ilk — often caricatured by the unwellcome shrill of the mobile phone on the moor — the grandees are now more or less equivoical: the gatecrasher, they have concluded, has his uses. He can, for a start, pay the price good shooting demands: £20-£25 a head per pheasant, or £80-£100 per brace of grouse.

Better still, from the landowners' point of view, the Clores of today now unashamedly use their companies as a means by which to mix business with pleasure.

"It can be banks; it can be estate agents who take a day," says the northern landowner. "In fact, you'd be hard pressed to find a bank which hasn't taken a corporate day in the past ten years. It's a fabulous way to entertain people. And from our point of view, if you can call it corporate entertainment you can legitimately claim back VAT — 17½ per cent on £10,000; it's worth doing, particularly on a big grouse day."

But today's corporate shoots are different to those of the late-Eighties Porsche-and-braces peak. It is unlikely anyone in the City now can trump the stories such as that told (in

his book *Fiasco*) by Frank Partnoy, a former derivatives trader on Wall Street, of how directors of Morgan Stanley treated themselves to a dove shoot in Uruguay.

Deutsche Bank Group, the parent company of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, has its own partridge shoot in Spain, said, by some, to be one of the best in the country. The bank also takes on several days' shooting in Britain each year.

It is hard to imagine any landowner belittling the contribution corporate shooting can make to his estate's accounts; indeed, without it, he would be hard-pressed to offer anywhere near as many days' shooting to friends and family.

But there is a price to be paid for having those along who are unfamiliar with the ways of the country shoot. A businesswoman experienced a memorable corporate day in Bedfordshire recently. "The first drive had some partridge in it," she recalls. "One went out quite low and left. The left-hand gun shot at it, missed, and took out the back window of a Range Rover, which rather surprised the woman sitting inside."

"The gun," he says, "admitted that he would have pretended that it was somebody else, except that was the only shot fired in the entire drive."

Later, there were lots of jokes about putting the Range Rover on the game card. But the barrister adds: "When I was young, you'd have been sent home for that. In these days of corporate shooting, it's just a laugh."

The owner of a comparatively small shoot in Shropshire discovered

the difference between the corporate and private worlds when partridge shooting with clients in Cambridge, shire. "I had to fling myself face down into the field," he says. "The gun to the side of me followed straight through the line."

It proved a formative experience. "I now invite clients I know can shoot," he says, "and I take them somewhere nice and quiet, not to one of the big corporate shoots."

But it would not be accurate to portray the contemporary shooting man as some kind of gun-crazed parvenu, who only ventures out of town to splash his boots with mud and spray the air with shot, just as it would be absurd to preserve the myth of his prewar predecessor, his sporting prowess matched by his pedigree and eclipsed by his stupidity. The truth is that shooters are probably a more eclectic bunch than

ever before, and most of the novices will, like Charles Clore before them, have taken care to receive good instruction (in London, probably at Holland & Holland's shooting grounds at Northwood).

"You've got the old aristocratic brigade," one privileged gun says, "then you've got the bankers who spend hundreds of thousands of pounds; then you've got these little syndicates of the butcher, the baker and the candlestick-maker."

Perhaps there is no more vivid exemplar of the first group than Lord Lambton, who returns to Biddick Hall at Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, from Tuscany for a few days' sport, wearing his dark glasses and only stirring himself from his shooting stick for a particularly high bird.

But even Lord Lambton, who sometimes seems to have strayed from an Edward St Aubyn novel, has never flinched from making money from shooting, letting Biddick to super-rich tenants such as Alfred Taubman, the owner of Sotheby's. "They don't care what they're charged providing it's good," says one of Lord Lambton's guests.

The over-exuberant shot is nothing new. A septuagenarian recalls a story, doubtless apocryphal, concerning a youthful Lord Forte shooting partridge near London. His performance was said to have been erratic. "The following Monday, there were meant to be six guns, but when he arrived, he was the only one there."

His son, Rocco Forte, by comparison, is considered an excellent shot and an exemplary host — testimony, perhaps, to the power of shooting to affect the perfect evolution, from deal-maker to sportsman, within a generation or two. "He loves it with a passion," says one of his guests. "I think it's the only thing he is passionate about really."

Perhaps the same was true of Sir Charles Clore, who, notwithstanding his experiences at Blenheim, felt assured enough to run his own estate. In the eight years up to and including 1978, 42,595 pheasants were shot on his land in Berkshire. And there, his table manners were his own affair.

Is it a man or a mountain?

Scotland may soon have its own Mount Rushmore, Andrew Morgan writes

Alexander Stoddart, one of Scotland's finest monumental sculptors, recently unveiled a two-ton bronze of the Scots philosopher David Hume in the heart of Edinburgh.

But if his next project goes ahead it will dwarf anything he has done before. He plans to create a vast mountain sculpture on the magnificent Ben Brachan massif in the Highlands which will be visible for miles around. The reclining figure of Oscar, dead son of Ossian, a legendary Gaelic warrior poet, will be half a mile long and a quarter of a mile high.

It would cost millions and take up to 50 years to complete, but would be Europe's biggest sculpture and a new wonder of the world on the scale of the Mount Rushmore National Memorial, in South

Dakota, which attracts two million visitors a year. Ben Cruachan, to the east of Oban, is known as "the supreme mountain of Argyll" and its granite has a similar density to Mount Rushmore, where the four presidential heads were carved between 1927 and 1941.

Ossian gained renewed fame in Europe in 1762 when the Scottish poet, James Macpherson, published what is claimed to be translations of his 3rd-century poems. Goethe became an admirer but, because of anti-Scots feeling in England, the poems were deemed fraudulent. London literati found it inconceivable that epic poetry could have

originated among the barbarian Scots.

Stoddart, 38, a passionate Scottish nationalist, says: "Carving the mountain in Ossianic terms will be a way of insisting on the truth of the heroic capacities of Scotland."

Politicians at Argyll and Bute Council are enthusiastic about Stoddart's vision, which would bring much-needed employment to the area. Local people could be trained as sculptors or to carry out the task of shifting rock.

Campbell Cameron, a councillor in the area, is thrilled. "It's remarkable there are still people with such visionary dreams," he says. There remains, however,



An artist's impression of the son of Ossian sculpture

the question of landowners' permission. Several own the massif and the one owning Stoddart's preferred site says that, while sympathetic, he fears the intrusion.

Dianne Stein, one of Scotland's foremost arts fundraisers, is confident that millions could be put in the hat for such a grand project from lottery and millennium cash and enterprise funding. The project would take longer

than at Mount Rushmore, with its benign climate, where the sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, and his team created the 60ft heads of presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt.

Stoddart says: "I hope to see part of the project completed. The Rushmore sculptor didn't live to see his work completed, but I'd be happy if everything were set up."



Sculptor Alexander Stoddart

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OS ref: SS8/228 on sheet 183.

How to get there: from the A30, follow signs to Shaftesbury. Also nearby: Gold Hill, popular with film-makers and the setting for Hovis advertisements. Seven miles southeast is Sturminster Newton, where Thomas Hardy lived for a time.

DEBORAH KING



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WEEKEND COURSES AND ACTIVITIES

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NOVEMBER 28-30

Mountain Biking in Cumbria. With HF Holidays (0181-905 9558). Price £114.

Make Your Own Christmas Cards. A weekend of creative paper-making at the Hawkwood College at Stroud in the Cotswolds. (01453 750034). Full-board, £101.

A Taste of Buddhism: Creative Writing. At the Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, near Bath. (01761 433709). From £36-£69, inclusive.

Shubert's 150th Anniversary: Dyslexia. A practical approach. Both this weekend at Braziers, Ipsden, Wallingford, Oxon (01491 680221). All-inclusive, £92.

Late Autumn Bird Weekend: Improve Your Photography. Watercolours for Near-Beginners. All this weekend at the Flatford Mill Field Study Centre (01206 208283) at East Bergholt in Constable Country. From £79-£102, inclusive.

A Writers' Workshop: Christmas Quilting: Straw Lacework: Landscapes in Watercolour. All this weekend at the Hill Residential College, Aberystwyth, Gwent. (01495 333777). Price £88, inclusive.

Stepping out for Samaritans. A writing course. Getting the Most from your Portable Computer: Diagnostics and the Ballet Russe: A Taste of Wines from the American Continent: Knotting in Embroidery. Modern Painting Series 2 —

Post Impressionism. All this weekend at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Bucks (01494 890295). Price £159 residential, £59 non-residential.

Silversmithing, Bangles and Spoons: Painting the Fruits of Autumn: Life Drawing: Viol Concert Music. All this weekend at the West Dean College, Chichester, Sussex (01243 811301). From £150 residential, £97 non-residential.

Handbells in Harmony: Winter Landscapes in Watercolour: Christmas Decorations: Natural History Illustration. All this weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, Sussex (01798 865306). Prices from £114 residential, £90 non-residential.

Life Painting in Oils: Blacksmithing for Beginners: Basic Woodworking and Carpentry. All this weekend at the West Dean College, Chichester, Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £150 residential, £97 non-residential.

Certified First Aid. A useful course for families at Braziers, Ipsden, Wallingford, Oxon (01491 680221). Price £112, full-board.

Arms, Armour and Fortifications of the Middle Ages. At the University of Oxford, Dept of Continuing Education, Rewley House (01865 270360). Price £44.

Christmas Crackers or The Folklore and History of Christmas. At the Burton Manor College, South Wirral, Cheshire (0151-336 6586). Price £98.

The Bardic Mysteries. At Hawkwood College, Stroud, Glos (01453 750034). From £111 to £119, inclusive.

Wine Appreciation: Christmas Walks and Talks: Yoga: Poetry at Christmas. At the Hill Residential Centre, Aberystwyth (01495 333777). Prices from £88.

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Silk Painting: Academic Drawing in Tone: Calligraphy: Adornment of the Garden. All this weekend at the West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £97.

Folk Dancing for Singles. With HF Holidays at Malhamdale, Wiltshire (0181-905 9558). Prices from £149.

English Cathedrals: Trollope and Hardy, the way we write now. Both this weekend at the Maryland College, Woburn, Bedfordshire (01525 292901). Prices from £99, inclusive.

Putting People in Pictures: Making a Traditional Teddy Bear: Wines for Special Occasions: Alexander Technique. All this weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, Pulborough, Sussex (01798 865306). Prices from £114 residential, £90 non-residential, tuition and meals included.

The Jacobite Challenge, 1688-1759: Images of Royalty: The War Plays of Euripides: Burne Jones in Context. A varied range of courses this weekend at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price £117, inclusive.

Christmas Canapes: Cities of the Baltic Botanical Illustration. All this weekend at the Earmley Concourse, Chichester, Sussex, (01243 670392). Prices from £142 residential, £98 non-residential.

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DECEMBER 5-7

Skiing Workshops and Practice. Get ready for the slopes with a day or a weekend at the Calshot Activities Centre, Calshot Spit, Southampton (01703 892077). Price £45 per day, including equipment.

Fell Walking Weekends in the Lake District. With Mountain Goat and Countrywide Holidays (0161-448 7112). From Grasmere to the more remote fells. Accommodation and transport included, prices from £133 per head.

A Guided Tour of the Universe: The Natural History of Christmas: Reading Latin Documents. All this weekend at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price £117, full-board.

Top-to-Toe Hair and Beauty: Stained Glass Lighting Design. Three courses this weekend at the Lancashire College, Chorley (01257 260909). Price, all-inclusive, £96.

We Were Amused, entertainment and leisure in the Victorian era: The Music of Spain. Two lively courses this weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, Sussex (01798 865306). From £114.

Handmade Chocolates for Christmas: A Christmas Bridge Party: Competitive Duplicate Bridge with partners for singles: Painting on Silk: You Too Can Sing. All this weekend at the Earmley Concourse, Chichester, Sussex (01243 670392). Price per course, £142 residential, £98 non-residential.

Folk Music for Fun. At the Belstead House Education and Conference Centre, Ipswich (01473 686321). From £75-£95, full board.

The Music of Sibelius: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Tombs of the Pharaohs. Courses at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset (01460 55806). From £24 per day or £115 per weekend.

Drawing for the Terrified. An introductory course at the Alston Hall Residential College, Longridge Preston, Lancashire (01772 784661). From £75, full board.

Life Painting in Oils: Blacksmithing for Beginners: Basic Woodworking and Carpentry. All this weekend at the West Dean College, Chichester, Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £150 residential, £97 non-residential.

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Advent Reflection and Celebration. At the Ammerdown Centre, Bath, Avon (01761 433709). Prices from £69, all-inclusive.

The Natural History of Christmas: Winter Walks. Two outdoor courses this weekend at Urchfont Manor, Devizes, Wills (01380 840495). From £99 inclusive.

Life Painting in Watercolours: Floral Craft. Two courses this weekend at the Alston Hall Residential College, Preston (01772 784661). From £75 inclusive.

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The Jacobite Challenge, 1688-1759: Images of Royalty: The War Plays of

All too soon those little iguanas, crocodiles and snakes outgrow the spare bedroom, says Carol Price

Help, my pet python is trying to eat me

Often when I answer the phone, there'll be some screaming in the background," Sarah Beales says. "The other night it was a man whose 6ft rock python, having bitten him, was trying to coil round and constrict him."

The snake's attack was a feeding response—but it had to go, says Ms Beales, of the Proteus Reptile Rescue, Birmingham.

"In fact, 6ft is quite small for a rock python," she says. "They can grow to more than 20ft and are notoriously temperamental and aggressive."

Unfortunately, this is not the sort of thing that many would be reptile owners know—or are made aware of—when they first glimpse that cute little hatchling in the pet shop.

Once they discover that the apparently easy pet which never needs walks or elaborate grooming grows and grows—iguana, for example, can expand from 6in to 6ft in five years and have antisocial habits and rather specialised needs—the fun of reptiles and turtles seems to pass.

Hundreds of thousands of reptiles are being discarded every year, presenting a crisis for their rescuers. Proteus alone rescues about 1,000 cold-blooded cast-offs a year from all over the country—be they terrapins from Teesside, Burmese pythons from Scotland or iguanas which have run amok in Cornwall.

One of Proteus's more bizarre acquisitions was Amy the spectacled cymura—a 5ft-long crocodile which had been kept in a Bedford family's spare bedroom for 13 years.

"They were very fond of it, but it had outgrown its tanks and its welcome," Ms Beales says.



Cold-blooded creatures who may not be easy to live with: green iguana, above; pet python, right, cuddles up to the youngest member of the family



FRANK SPOONER



ARDEA

Saltwater crocodile, above, in a swimming pool in Darwin, Australia; red-eared terrapin, below, imported from America



Ms Beales also warns against people who call themselves "reptile rescue agencies" but make a business out of getting unwanted pets free to sell them on. "Too many people think reptiles are pets you can easily replace, should they get sick or tiresome," she says. "It's wrong to think you can keep them properly on the cheap."

She gave a rough estimate of the costs you could expect to pay: "A small lizard might cost £7.50, or a baby python £25, but then you have to buy a decent enclosure that can cost £50 to £2,000, and spend at least another £100 for a thermostat, ultraviolet lights and fittings plus a heater. Sometimes we get reptiles in with terrible burns just because owners couldn't be bothered to spend £2.50 on a heater guard."

Despite the neglect and ignorance of some owners, both Ms Beales and Dr Hall concede that a great many people do look after their reptiles extremely well. But their success is the result of tremendous effort, education and commitment.

Those who lack the time or will for all three may be better off with something simpler like goldfish—which, thankfully, have never been known to swing off your neck by their teeth.

● Proteus Reptile Rescue (0121-364 6033) offers reptile advice but needs donations to continue its work. London Zoo (0171-722 3333) has leaflets on exotics at £1 each.

"People don't realise how big things like reptiles and turtles can grow, or how long they can live—well up to 30 years, which outlives their role as children's pets. And their living environment, in terms of heat, light and humidity levels, must be exactly correct, as must their diet, or they will get stressed and sick."

Dr Hall and the Pet Advisory Committee are trying to promote a better understanding of more exotic creatures and their welfare among pet shop stores and managers—many of whom seem ignorant of their needs. Other people seem more interested in

'Reptiles grow very large and can live for up to 30 years'

cashing in on a passing trend, with catastrophic results.

"About seven years ago, when the Ninja turtle craze exploded, everybody wanted to buy the equivalent red-eared terrapins from America," Dr Hall says. "They grew from the size of a 10p piece to that of a dinner plate, and became extremely aggressive and voracious."

Dr Hall and the Pet Advisory Committee are trying to promote a better understanding of more exotic creatures and their welfare among pet shop stores and managers—many of whom seem ignorant of their needs. Other people seem more interested in

predators. Fed-up owners then released them into lakes and rivers, even though it's illegal and highly irresponsible.

"Now they are chomping their way through all manner of native species—fish, frogs, ducklings and

This cat lady wears a dog collar

James Bone meets a one of America's most famous dogs and her posse of rescued cats



Stray cats are rescued in Mr Gonzalez's nightly patrols

The world of Philip Gonzalez is populated by dozens of colourful characters, such as the flirtatious one-eyed, red-head Revlon; the paranoid Vogue; Madame, the deaf snow-white beauty; the crippled Betty Boop; the Count of Monte Cristo, an aristocratic Russian; the monstrous Napoleon; and Prince Philip, who is infected with AIDS.

At four every morning and seven every evening, the humble Puerto Rican-born New Yorker makes his rounds of the backstreets of Long Beach, Long Island, to feed 140 stray cats. Those who eat in the backyard of a friendly local house he has given Viking names: Thor, Eric the Red, Osgod and so on. On the wasteland nearby are the painters: Dali, Picasso, Grandma Moses and Peter Max. On the traffic island live the Cowboys and Indians: John Wayne, Roy Rogers, Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. Then there is the scrub land called Paradise, inhabited by Rhet and Scarlett, Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Van Gogh.

Mr Gonzalez, 47, is a grizzled Vietnam veteran who used to practise martial arts until he lost the use of his right arm in an industrial accident. But he has the gentleness of St Francis of Assisi, and the same affinity with the animal world. He lives a simple existence on his disability allowance in a modest first-floor flat near the Atlantic Ocean, which he shares with 21 cats and his best friend, Ginny, a dog.

However, Ginny is not just any dog. The straggly little cross-breed, whom Mr Gonzalez saved from an animal shelter, is now one of the most famous dogs in America. Mr Gonzalez sees her as "part

schnauzer, part Siberian husky, part angel from heaven", and credits her with giving him a purpose in life. For Ginny is *The Dog Who Rescues Cats*—the title of Mr Gonzalez's biography of his extraordinary pet, which has just been published in Britain after becoming a bestseller in the United States. Ginny has a remarkable ability to seek out and rescue stray cats, whom she then adopts as though she were a feline herself. It was

Ginny who brought all the cats into her master's life. "I think she was either raised by cats, or maybe in a previous life she was a cat, or she could have been a cat-lady, feeding strays," Mr Gonzalez says. "It really impresses me. She gets extremely persistent when she sees a cat."

In February 1991, a pipe-cutting machine at a building site where he was working nearly chewed off Mr Gonzalez's right arm. No longer able to work, he retreated into himself. Concerned that he was sinking into depression, his neighbour, Sheila Harris, persuaded him to visit the local animal shelter. A dog, she thought, would at least get him out of the house.

The former soldier wanted a "big dog" that other people would envy. Inside a cage he saw what he thought was a German shepherd puppy. The vet informed him, however, that the dog was a year-old mother who had recently been spayed, and was a mixed breed that had already reached its full size. Nevertheless, it was love at first sight.

As Mr Gonzalez recalls in

his book: "She had a long, skinny body and thin, crooked legs, which were oddly matched to the broad-shouldered front of her... That dog had the most appealing face I'd ever seen, bright and intelligent and curious and sweet, all at the same time."

Even with a published biography, Ginny's life story will never be fully known. Originally, she belonged to a woman with three children who spent her welfare cheque on drugs. When the woman was evicted from her flat, the landlord found a scruffy, emaciated Ginny locked in the cupboard nursing a litter of three pups. The woman had left the dogs to die. Mr Gonzalez identified with this wounded animal. Like her, he had been badly hurt. Yet she, who had suffered not merely an accident but deliberate human neglect, held no rancour in her heart.

Sitting on his balcony, Mr Gonzalez admits that Ginny changed his life. "I was just staying indoors, really completely depressed, and then I got Ginny and started going out and then saving the cats gave me a purpose," he says. "She saved me. I was her first true rescue."

Not only does Ginny still yap contentedly at his ankles as his cats swarm around his feet, but the gutter above his head is lined with pigeons who know they can depend on him for a meal of dried cat-food. Lurking somewhere nearby are the raccoons and opossums that he also feeds on the balcony at night.

Ginny first revealed her talent for rescuing disabled cats during a walk early one morning. Passing an empty lot, she flew off her lead and ran towards a golden kitten. Instead of mauling the little stray, Ginny started licking it like a mother, making the cat purr happily. At one point, the kitten actually jumped on Ginny's back for a ride.

Sensing that Ginny wanted to feed her new friend, Mr Gonzalez opened a can of dog-food. That was the start of a new vocation that now costs him \$120 a day in cat-food alone, and can require thousands more to pay the vet. For instance, he spent \$4,200 on surgery for the Count of Monte Cristo.

Night after night, day after day, Ginny and her master



Made for each other. Ginny the mongrel and her owner share a flat with 21 cats

patrol the backstreets of their neighbourhood, retrieving stray cats. First, the deaf Madame moved in to Mr Gonzalez's one-bedroom flat. Then Vogue, Revlon, Betty Boop and Topsy, who suffers from cerebral palsy, and Tiger, Spot, Caesar, Pinky and Princess, and Sheba (who became Solomon when it became apparent "she" was a tom-cat) and the two cats called Camus, and Darlene and the rest.

Ginny's story first came to the public's attention when Mr Gonzalez went to an evening class in Manhattan on "How to Talk to Your Cat". Betty Boop, named after an American cartoon character, was refusing to use the cat litter and was urinating on the carpet. Mr Gonzalez wanted to find out why. (It turned out that she had injured back paws which hurt when she

trod on cat litter.) Carol Wilbourn, a "cat therapist", asked the class how many cats they each had at home. Mr Gonzalez confessed that he had eight, because his dog kept rescuing them.

Ms Wilbourn told a friend at *Good Housekeeping* magazine, who sent a reporter and photographer. The article, published in June 1994, prompted the book, co-written with Leonore Fleischer, which has now gone through ten printings in America and been followed by a sequel, *The Blessing of the Animals*. Mr Gonzalez recently signed a contract to turn Ginny's story into a Hollywood film.

The day I visited Mr Gonzalez, he had just saved a litter of five kittens from an early death at the hands of a local vet. With typical aplomb, he named them after the Marx Brothers: Harpo, Chico,

Gummo, Zeppo and Groucho. "Every time I help one out, I feel stronger inside, especially when I save a life," he declared.

Later, we took Ginny for a walk to the Paradise scrubland. Loosed from her lead, the little mongrel galloped through the grass towards a tri-coloured calico cat who came to greet her. The stray was Van Gogh—although he must have been an early Van Gogh because he still had both ears. The two kissed nose to nose and then Van Gogh settled down for Ginny to groom him.

"If people got along the way Ginny gets along with cats," Mr Gonzalez observes, "there wouldn't be any wars and the world would be a much happier place."

● *The Dog Who Rescues Cats* is published by Simon & Schuster, £9.95

Our three-year-old Burmese cat lived indoors until he came to us seven months ago. Since then, he has had a wonderful time, chasing and catching rabbits, shrews, mice and, once, a squirrel. He has also learnt to climb up trees. But not down. He has had three rescues by helpful, ladder-owning friends, has gone AWOL (we suspect up a tree) for three days, and once the fire brigade had to be called out. How can we teach him to return to earth under his own steam—or stop him climbing trees in the first place?

I am sure your Burmese is enjoying his new-found freedom and I am just as sure that he will find his way down from the highest tree if he is left to his own devices. Rescuers, be they professional firefighters or enthusiastic amateurs, don't help. He is much more likely to fall and injure himself with human help than if he is left to his own devices. If he appears to be trapped up a tree, wait until it is dark, then use a powerful torch to encourage him to follow the beam down from one branch to another. Or just ignore him. Many years ago, one of my cats had an insatiable ambition to get on to the roof of our bungalow. I climbed a ladder and "rescued" him a score of times. Then I got fed up and this coincided with his learning how to get down on his own. I suspect your cat will respond in the same way.

We have just moved to an old farm with a paddock and a large pond, nearly half an acre. We would like to keep ducks and



Make sure your ducks are safe from foxes

perhaps some ornamental water fowl. We have always kept pets but don't know much about birds outdoors. How do we start?

You have the beginnings of a paradise for ducks: space and water. Start in the spring with one of the "common" breeds: Aylesbury, Khaki Campbell or Muscovy. They will need a daily feed of cereal mixture from the local corn merchants. Evening is the best feeding time, to persuade them to come home, and the dining area should be close to the pond. Do not encourage ducks to come to your back door. Duck droppings are profuse, liquid and smelly. Shutting ducks in a substantial wooden shed overnight, with straw for bedding, helps to foil foxes. And if you want eggs, let the birds have a lie-in. Ducks lay in the early morning, so by 10am there are eggs on the floor waiting to be collected. An alternative anti-fox system is a raft with a basic shelter and a few water plants. Attach a rope to each bank so it can be brought to the shore or towed to mid-pond. Ducks sleeping or nesting on this platform are quite safe.

I live in an isolated cottage and I have been burgled twice. I have heard about wolf hybrids—crosses between wolves and German shepherd dogs. Are there any special difficulties about keeping them?

Before buying a wolf hybrid you need a licence under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act. This requires the local council to be satisfied that you will keep the wolf hybrid in an adequate, escape-proof kennel and run; that you have third-party insurance; and that your premises are inspected every year by a vet and an officer of the council. The licence fee and insurance can cost £200 a year. A wolf hybrid cannot be kept as a house dog, or taken for a walk on a lead. I do not know why anyone breeds them. Too many finish up having a boring, lonely life. The best guard dog is one that barks when a stranger approaches, but is friendly and affectionate. The only risk is that he—or she—might lick an intruder to death. But a burglar cannot be sure and the bark is enough to persuade most potential intruders to try their luck elsewhere.

JAMES ALLCOCK

● Write to *The Times* Vet, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9AN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.



ADOPT ME

REX is a three-year-old greyhound-cross-labrador who was brought into the RSPCA after his owner developed health problems and could no longer keep him. He is playful, but gentle with children and other dogs and would make a good family pet.

If you are interested in adopting Rex, please contact the RSPCA Mayhew Animal Centre (0181-969 0179).

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Pixie-like but determined

Karekin I, head of the Armenian Church, is a man with a mission to save his embattled people



It is claimed to be the original Garden of Eden — it is the land of Mount Ararat, the 17,000-foot peak where Noah's Ark came to rest and it was the world's first officially Christian state. Armenia, first evangelised by the apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus, became Christian in 301 thanks to St Gregory, who arrived from Caesarea, converted the King after 15 years of imprisonment, and became known by Armenians as the "Great Illuminator".

This month, the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church visited the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey. His Holiness Karekin I, born Neshan Sarkissian in northern Syria, studied theology at Oxford and is fluent in English, Armenian, French, Arabic and Turkish.

The first thing you notice about him is his black Armenian pointed cap, which gives Karekin a rather pixie-like demeanour. It is called an "avakat", he explains. "It is worn so that the devil cannot dance on your head."

Catholicos Karekin, 65, has the air of a prophet issuing stark warnings about the state of the world. "Secularism and consumerism are reaching extremes where God is being eliminated from the concept of life itself," he says.

Karekin is steeped in the history of his nation and his church, a church which split from what became mainstream Christianity because its leaders were unable to attend a crucial conference, the Council of Chalcedon, in 451 when Armenia was being invaded by hordes of Zoroastrian Persians.

Their absence meant that, along with some of the world's oldest churches, they have stuck to the creedal definition of God Christ worked out at Ephesus two years earlier, "one nature united in the Word Incarnate", leaving the rest of us to grapple with the Trinity. The Armenians can-

not be neatly labelled Orthodox, Catholic, Monophysite or anything else. They can only be called Christian. Karekin's eyes twinkle as he sits in the sumptuous surroundings of Lambeth Palace — despite being one of the oldest in the business, the Armenian church is extremely close to the Church of England, one of the youngest.

He speaks sadly, but without bitterness, of the decades of communist rule — Armenia was swallowed up by the former Soviet Union after centuries of oppression by the neighbouring Turks and others. He also warns that Europe has been at the centre of a "world quake", that so much has changed in the past 15 years that we are all falling victim to a sort of mental and spiritual indigestion.

Armenia was formerly a Soviet Socialist Republic. Before that it was variously subject to Tsarist, Ottoman and Turkish rule. It has been in the news recently because of more fighting, this time over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh which the Armenians, who have lost so much, could be forgiven for wanting to hang on to.

Karekin does not beat the nationalist drum. Not a single anti-Turkish sentiment leaves his lips, even though in the

early years of this century thousands of Armenians were massacred, and a third of all Armenians were exterminated by the Turks in the First World War. And in spite of the troubles of the Lebanon, his years spent there leading, comforting and supporting his expatriate community, have not deflected him from his primary mission: to renew the life of his church by relating gospel teachings to the 6.5 million Armenians who make up his flock.

Centuries of persecution resulted in a diaspora which has seen millions of Armenians living abroad, in America, France, Britain and elsewhere. But they have remained socially and culturally united, a cohesion credited to the Armenian church — which also helped in the home country during the communist years.

Karekin says: "Now that there is a disenchantment about communism, the Christian faith is the deepest inspiration of the people. It is in their history. Whenever they read their history, whatever the page or stone they turn, there is the Christian imprint. It is impossible to speak of Armenian culture without speaking of the Christian faith."

Of all the world's church leaders, Catholicos Karekin has proved himself one of the most ardent in seeking the unity of the gospel commands. His concern about the advance of materialism, the latest army to lay siege to his embattled people, is one of his motivations. "No single church can face this challenge alone," he says, "neither the Roman Catholic, nor the Orthodox, nor the Anglicans, nor any other Protestant or Free church. This challenge has to be faced with togetherness."

RUTH GLEDHILL



Karekin I of Armenia with Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury

Why we should follow the example of the saints

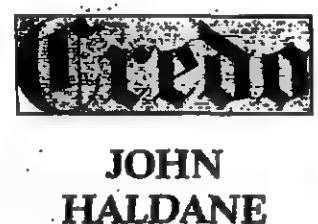
Religion has often served social and political functions. As such, it has been reviled by partisans of both right and left. Social conservatives recognise the value of a sense of the transcendent in sustaining those pieties towards the past and obligations to the future that are essential if traditional morality and social order are to be sustained. Meanwhile, the advocates of redistributive taxation and of state welfare invoke Judeo-Christian ideals of universal brotherhood and care for the disadvantaged against the politics of possessive individualism.

This is all well and good. Religious ideas can quite properly be invoked in support of social philosophies, and the previous appeals are interesting examples of this, but religion is not itself a form of politics, and nor are social mores or justice forms of, or adequate substitutes for, salvation.

The true purpose of religion is to sanctify or make holy. This is achieved in a variety of ways but always through the grace of God. One of the important channels

through which grace flows is the example and agency of holy persons. This raises the old question of how one may identify such persons. The equally ancient answer to which ("by their fruits") is that we may do so by looking at their lives, in particular their attitudes to, and their works for, the poor in body, mind and spirit, and by their discernment and spiritual wisdom.

There is a contemporary tendency to use the term "saint" to refer to anyone whose life and works are especially favoured, particularly if they have been the object of criticism. Yet true sanctity is a rare and precious feature in human life. How



JOHN HALDANE

many such people there are is hard to determine, since holiness and public renown do not sit easily together. Certainly there have been holy men and women famous in their own lifetimes: St Francis of Assisi, St Catherine of Genoa and John Wesley are among the many examples. But they also belong to less cynical ages

in which people took things as they found them and did not rush to debunk great figures as self-promoting hypocrites.

The most common message of the saints is to give yourself to God and to look after people in need. The lesson of history, however, is that those who have most deeply loved and served their fellows have

also loved and served God. There are two important reasons for this. First, the task of caring for others is often difficult and sometimes dangerous; it requires deep conviction, and religion can provide this. Second, and more importantly, the love of others may flow out of a love of God. I do not mean that others

are loved for the sake of God, as if the concern were not for them as such. But rather, that a religious understanding of the sort possessed by the saints provides them with a vision of what human beings really are, namely "images of God".

Saint John of God was born in Portugal in 1495. Having been a servant he became a soldier and then a shepherd. By stages he grew deeply troubled by his neglect of God, sold all his possessions and gave himself to a life of prayer. As his biographer writes, "he died to the world". Others judged him mad and he was confined to an asylum. When he was freed and he worked relentlessly for the poor, in whom he had come to see the animating presence of Christ. His teaching to those who followed him was simple: "Labour without intermission to do all the good works in your power whilst time is allowed you". It is a salutary injunction that we would do well to follow.

John Haldane is Professor of Philosophy at the University of St Andrews.

Local boy makes good

Ruth Gledhill admires the style of preacher of the year



THE PREACHERS, three men, two women and all Anglican, sat in the front row, looking nervous. This was the climax of the third Preacher of the Year award, organised by the College of Preachers and sponsored by The Times.

In the past two years the award has been won by men. Father Bill Anderson, of Aberdeen, and the Rev Barry Overend, of Leeds, were among the judges, as was Ernie Rea, head of religious broadcasting at the BBC. Joan Bakewell, writer and broadcaster, was chairman.

Some of us were praying for a woman to win this year. Sadly, in spite of the excellence of the sermons of the Rev Sally Chapman, of Willenhall, West Midlands, and Gill Green, of Newmarket, Suffolk, the only lay person in the final, this was not to be. Durham Cathedral was built as a shrine to St Cuthbert, who did not have much time for women. To deliver their sermons, the preachers had to climb high into the pulpit, and to get there they had to cross a Purbeck marble line near the font. It is said that in medieval times, women were not allowed beyond this line. Maybe St Cuthbert had a hand in the result.

It was the local boy who won, much to the delight of many in the congregation. Not only did the Rev Paul Walker, born in York and serving as priest-in-charge of a newly founded church in Moorside, Sunderland, have the advantage in preaching last — after four sermons it is always a relief when the fifth is at hand — but he was by far the most entertaining, his levity leavened by the necessary moral and spiritual points.

We were welcomed by the sub-dean, Canon Michael Perry, and the Bishop of Durham, the Right Rev Michael Turnbull, said the bidding prayer: "We pray for those charged with the preaching of truth. We ask that they may be given holy intention, integrity of mind and freedom in the spirit that they may declare the truth boldly."

All five preachers had been invited to speak on "holiness". After the two women preached, both of them capturing and holding our attention with ease, it was the turn of the Rev Neville Manning, of Newhaven, East Sussex. This was all in a day's work for Mr Manning, who delivers as many as four sermons on a Sunday.

Next in the pulpit was the Rev Michael Parker, Rector of St John and St Leonard in Bedford. Holiness is about an "otherness" that is real and can be known, he said. In the face of the holiness of Christ, we all long to have the grime of our lives removed.

All the sermons were wonderful examples of holiness in action and by the end I felt a tiny bit holier than I had at the start.

● Durham Cathedral, Durham, DH1 3EQ (0191-380-4200). Entries for next year's Preacher of the Year can be submitted, preferably in manuscript form, to Ruth Gledhill at The Times.

MIKE POWELL



The Rev Paul Walker: spiritual but entertaining

Church services tomorrow

ARMAGH CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 M, Canon F D Swann; 3.15 Ch E.
BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 S Euch; 3.30 Ch E, Walsley in D minor.
BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Stainer in A, Canon G O'Neill; 4 Ch E.
BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 Ch M; 10.30 Euch, Coronation Mass (Mozart); 4 Ch E, Canon Gallie.
BRECON CATHEDRAL: 8, 11 Euch, Canon P Jackson; 3.30 E, Stewart in C.
BRISTOL CATHEDRAL: 7.40 M; 8 HC; 10 Ch Euch; 3.30 Ch E, Stanford in G.
CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 7.45 M; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells); Canon C Hill; 3 E.
CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11.15 S Euch; 6 Ch E, Responses: Rose, Canon M Proctor.
CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 11 S Euch; 3.30 E, Goss in E.
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 11 S Euch, Messe Solemnelle (Langlais); 3.30 E.
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Oxford: 8 HC; 10 M, Short Service (Byrd), Canon Ward; 11.15 S Euch; 6 E.
COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 MP; 8 HC; 10.30 Euch, Messe cum júbilo (Durufle); 3 German & Polish Lutherans; 5 Ch E.
DERBY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.45 S Euch, Coronation Mass (Mozart); 6 E, Ven I Gatford.
DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 HC, Durke in F; 3.30 E.
ELY CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina); 3.45 E sung by The Plasset Scholars.
EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch; 11.15 M, Responses: Rose, 3 E, Stanford in G; 6.30 ES, Rev Dr D Ison.
GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch; 11.15 M; 6.30 E, Summison in G, Rev S Crinall.
HEREFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch, Missa Eliensis (Willis); 11.30 M, Britten in E; 3.30 E.
LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 Ch M, Stanford in B flat, Ven H Jones; 12 HC; 4 Ch E.
LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Jackson in G; 3.30 E.
LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 7.45 L; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch; 11.15 M; 12.30 HC; 3.45 E.
LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 8 MP & HC; 10.30 Euch; 3 Ch E; 4 HC.
LLANFAFF CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M & L; 8, 9 Euch; 11 S Euch, Ireland in G; 12.15 HC; 3.30 Ch E; 6.30 E & Sermon, Rev R C Parrish.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch, Jackson in G; 6 Ch E.
NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 10.30 S Euch, Mass for 3 voices (Byrd); 6.30 Ch E, Noble in B minor, Canon T Palmer.
NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP & HC; 9.15 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Schubert in G; 3.30 Judges Service; 6 EP; 6.30 Euch.
PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 9.30 M; 10.30 Euch, Summison in F; 3.30 E.
PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 C, Canon D Isaac; 11 S Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells); 6.30 E.
ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 M; 10.30 S Euch, Messe Solemnelle (Langlais); 3.15 Memorial E for Canon R Mason.
SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch; 11.30 M; 3 Ch E, Collegium Magdalenis (Leighton); 6.30 E.
SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 MP; 10.30 S Euch, Durke in F; 6.30 E.
SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch; 11 Ch Euch; 3 Ch E, Coventry Service (Whetnam).
SOUTHWELL MINSTER: 7.30 M & L; 8 HC; 9.30 C; 11 S Euch, Jackson in G, Canon P N Humphreys; 3.15 E.
TRURO CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M; 10 S Euch, Missa Aeterna Christi (Palestrina); 5 EP; 6 County Service for Youth Sunday.
WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 C; 11 Solemn Euch, Missa Brevis (Leighton), Canon R Gage; 4 E.
WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 8 HC; 10 M, Magdalen Service (Leighton); 5.45 Organ Recital; 6.30 E.
WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 7.8, 9 M; 10.30 Solemn Mass, Messe Solemnelle (Langlais); 12 Mass; 2.45 Organ Recital; 3.30 Sol V & B; 5.30, 7 Mass.
WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 M; 11.15 S Euch, Coronation Mass (Mozart); 3 Service to Commemorate HM the Queen's Wedding Anniversary - ticket only; 3.30 E.
YORK MINSTER: 8.45 HC; 10 S Euch; 11 Ch Euch; 11.30 M; 4 E.
ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL, Hertfordshire: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11.15 M, Responses: Leighton, Canon Risson; 6.30 E.
ST ANDREWS CATHEDRAL, Aberdeen: 8 HC; 10.15 S Euch, Harwood in A flat; 6.30 ES, 5th Service (Tomkins).
ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Clwyd: 8 HC; 11 Ch M, Palmam Davids (Schütz); 3.30 EP.
ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC; 9.30 Cymun Bendigaid; 11.15 Ch Euch, Stanford in C & F; 6 Ch E, The Dean.
ST EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 S Euch, Rev R Davey; 11.30 Ch C, Durke in F; 3.30 Ch E.

ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, SE1: 8, 10 LM; 11.30 Solemn Mass; 1.30 Mass; 5 EP & B; 6 Mass.
ST GILES' CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8, 10 HC; 11.30 MS, Rev A R Morton; 6 Oboe Solo; 8 ES.
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8 Euch; 10.30 S Euch; 3.30 Ch E, Gibbons Short Service.
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, Glasgow: 8.30 Euch; 10 S Euch; 12 HC; 3.30-5.50 Diocesan Youth Service; 6.30 Ch E.
ST MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL, Old Aberdeen: 11 MS, Rev R Fraser; 6 ES.
ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 8.30 Euch in Lady Chapel; 11.15 M, Rev R J Riddell; 3.15 Ch E, Wood in F.
ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 S Euch, Missa Christi (Leighton); 3.15 E, Stanford in A; 5 Organ Recital.
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, SW7: 10.30 Divine Liturgy, Kievan and traditional polyphony, Met Anthony, ALL SAINTS, W1: 8 M; 10.20 MP; 11 HM; 5.15 LM; 6 E & B, Worcester Service (Howells), Rev N Mercer.
ALL SOULS, W1: 8 C; 9.30, 11.30 MP, Rev P Blackham; 6.30 EP, Rev Dr J Stott.
THE ASSUMPTION, W1: 11 MS, Mass for 4 Voices (Byrd).
CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, SW3: 8 HC; 10 Children's Service; 11 M, Rev Dr P Eby; 12.15 HC; 6 E, Rev D Beau.
CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, WC2: 11.15 MS, Rev A McDonald; 6.30 ES, Rev J McMahon.
FARM STREET, W1: 8, 9.30, 12.30, 4.15, 6.15 LM; 11 HM.
HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, SW7: 9 HC, Rev R Thorpe; 11 MS, Rev S Miller; 5, 7.30 Informal Service.
THE ORATORY, SW7: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Theresa Mass (Haydn); 12.30 Mass; 3.30 V & B; 4.30, 7 Mass.
ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH, W8: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y Ghazarian.
WESLEY'S CHAPEL, EC2: 9.45 HC; 11 MS, Gordon Barrill.
WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist): 11 MP, Rev P Graves; 6.30 ES.
ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), EC2: 11 Ch Euch; 7 Jazz Vespers.
ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, EC1: 9 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Missa O rex glorie (Lobos); 6.30 E, Purcell in G minor.
ST BRIDE'S, EC4: 11 Ch M & Euch, Missa Brevis (Walton), Canon J Oates; 6.30 Ch E, Wesley in E, Rev J Banister.
ST CLEMENT DANIES, 11 Ch Euch, Mass in G (Schubert), Rev J Colson.
ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, SW1: 11 HC; 6.30 ES.

ST ETHELDREDA'S, Ely Place: 11 S Mass, Mass in D (Dvorak).
ST GEORGE'S, W1: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Missa Brevis in A (Darlows), The Rector.
ST JAMES'S, W2: 10.30 S Euch, Mass in F (Schubert), Rev A Meldrum; 6 Ch E.
ST JAMES'S, Piccadilly: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Bishop J Gaillet; 5.45 EP.
ST JOHN'S, E15: 11 Family Service, Rev D Richards; 6.30 HC, Rev M Okello.
ST LUKE'S, SW3: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Ubi caritas (Durufle); 6.30 E, Rev J Streeter.
ST MARK'S, NW1: 8 HC; 9.45 Family C; 11 S Euch & Baptism, Messe Solemnelle (Verneux), Rev T Devanney-Jones.
ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8 HC; 9.45 Euch; 11.30 Visitors Service; 2.45 Chinese Service; 5 Ch E; 6.30 ES.
ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, W8: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11.15 Ch M, Fr F Gelli; 12.30 HC; 6.30 E, Fr M Foller.
ST MARY'S, SW7: 9, 10 LM; 11 HM; 6 Sunday E, Fr W Davage; 7.15 LM.
ST MARY-THÉ-VIRGIN, Primrose Hill: 8 HC; 10.30 Euch, Missa Brevis (Mozart), Rev S Chrysost; 6 Living with Faith.
ST MARYLEBONE, W1: 8 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Messe Solemnelle (Gounod).
ST PAUL'S, SW1: 8, 9 HC; 11 Solemn Euch, Mass in D (Mozart), Rev Dr C Cumliffe.
ST PETER'S, SW1: 8.15 HC; 10 Family Euch; 11 S Euch, Missa chorales (Liszt).
CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCLULA, HM Tower of London: 9.15 HC; 11 M & Sermon, Responses: Ayward, Rev P R C Abrahm.
CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Canon J Sykes.
CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC; 11 M; 3.30 E.
GROSVENOR CHAPEL, W1: 11 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Kelly), Rev D Dewey.
QUEEN'S CHAPEL OF THE SAVOY, WC2: 11 M, Vaughan Williams in G; 12.30 HC, The Chaplain.
GRAYS INN CHAPEL, WC1R: 11.15 Divine Service.
QUEEN'S FREE CHAPEL OF ST GEORGE, Windsor Castle: 8.30 HC; 10.45 M & Sermon; 11.45 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Walton); 5.15 E.
THE TEMPLE CHURCH, Fleet Street: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Responses: Smith, Vaughan Williams in C, Rev J Paul.
GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks, SW1: 11 M, Band of the Coldstream Guards; 12 HC.
ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE CHAPEL, SE1: 11 S Euch, Anglican Folk Mass (Martin Shaw), Rev G Clifford.

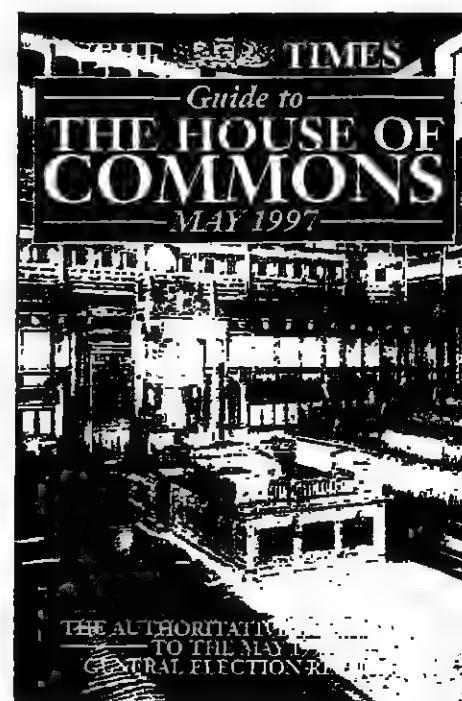
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Succulents may not bloom in winter

but they remain beautiful, says Jane Owen

Irresistible

fleshpots

A few years ago, those who dictate food fashion suddenly remembered about the seasons and suggested that no menu was worth its salt without it reflecting the time of year. With gardening there is less choice, although hybrids produce such odd flower shades that the year's colour cycle sometimes appears out of kilter with the season.

In autumn and winter the plants in office window boxes in cities are changed to cyclamen and pansies. The colour never ceases. As we retreat from the garden, so indoor plants take centre stage and legions of cyclamen and poinsettia enter.

In late autumn, before we break out in red, gold and green for Christmas, I like a cool respite from the colour circus with a reflective period of the glaucous whites, greys and blue-greens and the extraordinary shapes and forms of succulents. These are a broad group of plants with fleshy leaves designed to store water, so allowing them to survive drought conditions. All cacti are succulents but the reverse is not true.

It is an odd time of year to consider plants generally associated with hot, arid zones, but it is exactly when they are not flowering that I find their beauty most appealing: the exquisite pale leaves of some of the rosette-forming *Echeveria*, which look as if

they inspired the original Mogul window shapes; the pebble-like *Lithops* or "living stones"; the spidery forms of the air plant or *Bryophyllum*, and the sturdy barrel shapes of *Echinopsis* all appeal.

Best of all, most succulents, apart from the rosette-forming *Aeonium*, need almost no watering during winter — bear them in mind for hard-of-gardening friends. The most familiar, the Christmas cactus *Schlumbergera* X buckleyi, is soon to burst into colour. There are 700 varieties of Christmas cactus, ranging from the well-known bright crimson, orange, pink and purple-flowered varieties through to the less common white-flowered varieties like 'Snowflake'.

Those determined to soldier on with Christmas cacti must remember not to bring the plants into anywhere with light at night before their buds have formed (usually September). The flower buds need dark nights to form and so bringing the cacti

in to the living room or kitchen will ensure flowerless Christmas cacti. An added bonus of *Schlumbergera* is that, according to a new book, *Eco-Friendly House Plants* (published by Phoenix Illustrated at £9.99), Christmas cacti remove chemical vapours from the atmosphere — unlike most

other plants, they remove carbon dioxide and release oxygen at night.

Ralph Northcott, one of this country's leading nurserymen, and a regular gold medalist at Royal Horticultural Society shows, was lured into succulent obsession at the age of nine when playing in his grandmother's greenhouse. He knocked over a peanut cactus (*Echinopsis chamaecereus* syn *Chamaecereus silvestrii*) which fell apart. His grandmother gave him the bits to grow cuttings. He did so and used them as swaps for conkers and marbles. Thirty years on, he has a third of an acre under glass and 200,000 to 300,000 plants to look after with the help of his wife.

His suggestion for a good display at this time of year is *Echinocactus grusonii* (golden barrel cactus), the elegant *Cleisocactus strausii* 'Snow Pole' and the classic spaghetti western 'rabbit ear' cactus *Opuntia microdasys* 'Alba'.

Mr Northcott's

great achievement is to bring hardy cacti to this country. The Americans have been growing cacti in ever-cooler conditions since the 1970s but Mr Northcott is the first large grower to try this on a commercial scale.

Imagine an *Opuntia* outside your window, covered in snow. The Northcotts have witnessed such a sight and, if Mr Northcott's schemes go according to plan, the Chelsea Flower Show in 1999 should include a display of cacti hardy to minus 20C.

There are three fairly hardy plants not normally grown outside and in which Mr Northcott has most faith: *Opuntia pycnantha*, which is the spectacular bush form and can suffer temperatures as low as minus 34C; *Opuntia imbricata*, which is the tubular, Wild West cactus shape; and the yucca-like *Dasylirion texanum*.

Most cacti can be grown from seed and many can be propagated from rootstock or leaf or stem cuttings. They need a free-draining soil, about one-third sharp sand to two-thirds potting compost, and their main pest, mealybug, has to be sprayed with malathion. When dormant, succulents in pots need to be kept dry, and during the growing season the compost must dry out between waterings. But be warned — if you get infected by this obsession there are probably about 20,000 varieties.

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Ralph Northcott with his all-season cacti

'Most succulents need no watering during winter months'

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GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q My 8ft-high, 50ft-long leylandii hedge provides exactly the screen I need from the hotel next door, but cracks are appearing in the Tarmac of the hotel car park, spreading out from the base of half a dozen of my leylandii. I would welcome your advice on root pruning, whether I could be asked to pay for resurfacing, and whether I should start again with a new hedge. — J. Berry, Sandbach, Cheshire.



Keep leylandii in check

A I would leave well alone. Hedges give privacy and security on both sides, and I imagine the hotel management is as glad of your hedge as you are. Leylandii are not notorious for making big surface roots, but whatever the reason, it would do your hedge no good to have these roots severed. However, a neighbour has the right to sever them on his property, and if the roots cause a nuisance you are liable.

Q I used to use the herbicide Weedout to tackle couch grass because it did not affect other plants. Now that it has been withdrawn, can you recommend a useful alternative? — D.R. Gilling, Norwich.

A Weedout (aloxodym sodium) was very useful, if not quite the saviour you make it sound: it killed grasses generally, among broad-leaved plants. Farmers still have a commercial version, but there is no formulation for amateurs. Weedout was withdrawn, not by the Government but by the manufacturer, because it did not sell well enough.

Q I have acid soil and grow rhododendrons and camellias easily. All my neighbours have blue hydrangeas with no special treatment, but not me. What could be missing from my soil? Iron? Aluminium? — D.L. Smare, Guseley, West Yorkshire.

A To get a deep blue hydrangea you need first of all a willing variety. Those which are pale pink on limey soil will only be pale blue on acid soil. Deep reds on lime will be a rich blue on acid: for example, 'Altona', 'Hamburg', 'Europa' and the lace-cap type 'Blue Wave'. If the soil is acid but the flowers are not blue, the soil is short of aluminium. This can be corrected by adding alun powder, sold in garden centres. Be careful not to overdose the plants, and follow the instructions on the packet.

● Write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9NN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. Enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.

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Some of Britain's most beautiful and historic gardens are at last being restored, Barbara Abbs discovers

The Victorian garden of St Mary's was laid out in the 1890s by the Hon Algernon Burke, son of the Earl of Mayo and married to an Algernon in Cecil Wilde's *The Vicar of Being Earnest*. It included a circular orchard and yew hedges. It still has its original greenhouse, potting shed, apple store and 140ft fruit wall. To restore the grounds, a St Mary's Lost Garden Appeal has been launched, and because the garden is in the centre of one of Sussex's prettiest villages, a flow of visitors is guaranteed.

What the walkers may miss, however, is the collection of rhododendrons and exotic trees collected by Sir Herbert. He was a prolific writer, about his garden, local history and politics, and a painter as well. Gavin Maxwell describes his grandfather painting and gardening all day, activities he was somewhat dismissive of. Sir Herbert painted one of his

At Heligan, Tim Smith, with his zest and promotional skills, has led the way in showing the possibilities for fun and profit there are in projects like these.



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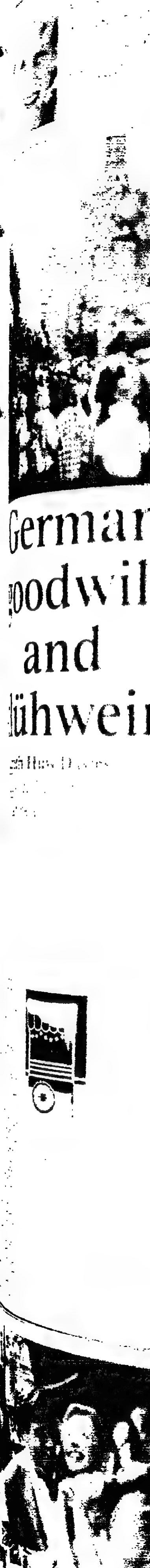
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Club Med shakes off its singles image

Elia - 27

THE TIMES TRAVEL

A dawn search for Gambian raptors

Birdwatching · 30



German goodwill and glühwein

Gareth Huw Davies finds seasonal cheer in a city at peace with itself

On a late afternoon of nipping chill, in a city square in the heart of Europe, I found the antidote to brash, glitzy, overblown, commercial Christmas.

As the daylight ebbed, a cheerful glow pulsed up from the covered stalls of the Nuremberg Christkindlmarkt, crammed together in medieval tightness. The city, capital of the Franconia region of northern Bavaria, claims the greatest concentration of department stores in Germany. The modest wares on sale here in the Hauptmarkt scarcely caused the people in smart coats and scarves to take out their credit cards but at four o'clock, a choir of Nuremberg mastersingers took the stage in front of Frauenkirche. Cue for the smart coats to press forward and form a genteel Germanic scrum around the base of the stage. I stood back to listen, wrapping my fingers for maximum warming effect around a ceramic mug of glühwein.

The choir sang *Hark the Herald Angels* in English, with unaccompanied purity. Ancient decree prohibits aural competition among the stalls — no traders' calls, no music.

The stallholders are chosen from local merchants. They stand proud under painted

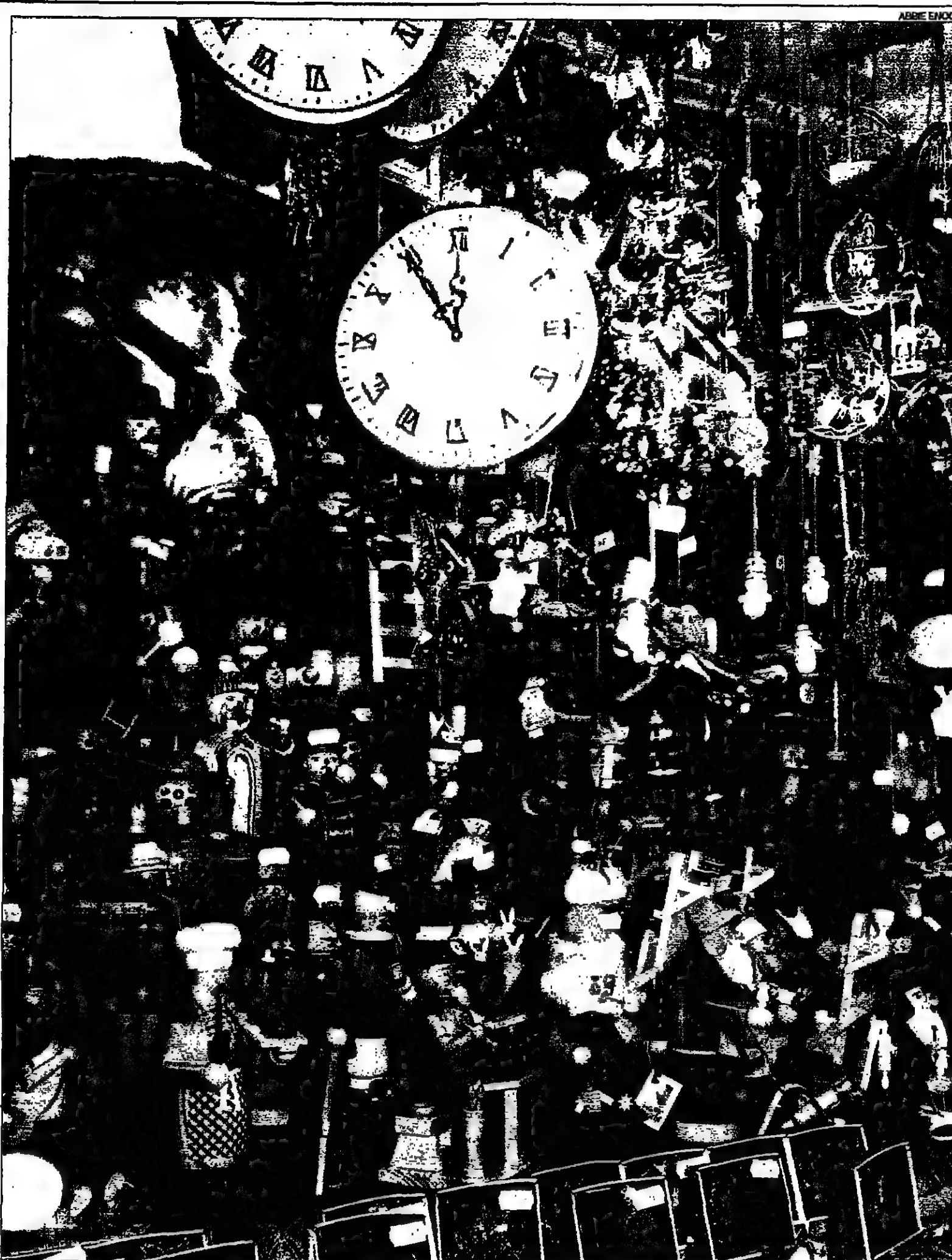
name boards, selling toys and small seasonal ornaments that dangle and rustle in the raw wind. There were gold foil angels, straw stars, candles and diaphanous mobiles. One lady surveyed her wares from a small aperture high at the back of her stall. She was entirely framed by Zwetschenmännlein — little prune and crêpe paper figures.

I bought Lebkuchen (spicy gingerbread), the deceptively dense and heavy Früchtebrot (fruit bread), Stollen and fruit tea, Fruchteis. Down every alley there was a family rolling over hot coals for the snacks that work to best effect outdoors on a cold evening.

The Wolf family served me grilled Nuremberg sausages, Rostbratwürste. There were six on my plate, with a towering hunk of bread and a mound of sauerkraut.

This is the market of markets, the first and best in Europe, the model for any city or town that wants to create a small enclave of tranquillity away from the seasonal shopping frenzy. This is Nuremberg's Christmas Continuous, carrying on much as it has since the Middle Ages.

The Christkindlmarkt (literally the Christchild's market) had an unlikely patron, Martin Luther, father of Protestantism, initiated the custom



The Nuremberg Christmas market (above left) combines the seasonal traditions of gift-buying and warming food and wine with rousing music

of giving presents to children at Christmas instead of new year. Fixed in its season, the market proceeded serenely through the centuries. Hitler, recognising a symbol of Germanic family values in the propaganda capital of his Reich, gave it his support.

Retribution came to Nuremberg on January 2, 1945, when Allied bombers destroyed 90 per cent of the old town. The market reopened in 1948, a beacon of hope even as the war trials were proceeding a few streets away in the Hall of Justice.

There is live music on the Frauenkirche stage on the hour, every hour — in a city whose name is contained in the title of a great opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, you would expect no less. On my walk from the airport bus stop at the main station,

through the traffic-free streets, buskers defied the one-degree cold to spread a continuous pathway of sound.

On Königstrasse, four French horns boomed out a melody of carols. A man playing an antique metal fiddle reeled off yearning melodies. And, incongruously and stoical, Kenny Grant "aus Schottland", in a kilt, rendered Brian Boru's march on a tin whistle.

Hans Sachs, the extraordinary 16th-century cobbler, poet, playwright and master-singer who is the hero of Wagner's opera, was everywhere in statues, on chocolate-box lids and ceramic plaques. I even saw him in paintable model-form, alongside soldiers of the Brandenburg Kurassier regiment.

Sachs's poem, *Bittersweet Married Life*, is controver-

sally set in lascivious sculpture as a fountain, depicting scenes from marital life — it was paid for from the 1-2 per cent of the building budget which developers are required to spend on public art.

The image of Nuremberg's other famous son, Albrecht Dürer, was there on chocolate boxes too, but disappointingly not in the original. This may have more to do with past art-market forces than any neglect by today's city fathers. I stayed at the Dürer Hotel, next door to his house. Today, as the Dürer Museum, it contains only copies of the master's works. For the originals, try the Prado or the Uffizi.

Save Nuremberg's market for the fading day. The morning is the time to climb the

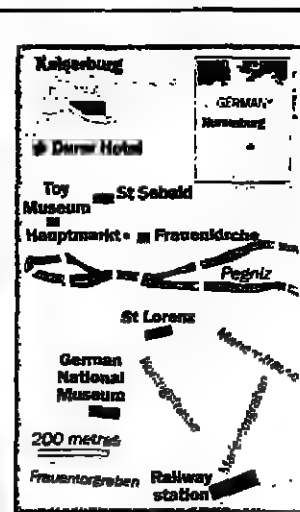
ramparts and take in the city. Germany is an unlikely candidate for monarchical restoration but if the king ever were to return, the Kaiserburg, the old imperial castle built on precipitous crags, is waiting.

The "old" city, rebuilt after the war much as it was, spread out before us, timbered houses with steep brown and red roofs enclosed by the three-mile-long, 14th-century city wall, with its 30 fortified towers and the tremendous bulwarks of four main gates.

My guide, a Germanophile American named Sally Slenczka, extended an arm over a feel-good city, comfortable and humane in its proportions. She made no attempt to divert my eye from the complex of buildings representing a mighty evil a few miles to the southeast. Medieval Nuremberg held

a powerful fascination for the Nazis and the first of the great Nazi rallies was held here in 1927. I am surprised that the physical remains of Hitler's propaganda machine are still there. But perhaps there is a point to leaving the unfinished Congress Hall, the Main Stand, Zeppelinfeld parade ground and colossal Grosse Strasse, 60 metres wide and two kilometres long (it is now a car park), as mute witnesses to Nazi megalomania.

Sally led me down into the old town. We crossed the river Pegnitz on Germany's first suspension bridge and passed the house where the mysterious founding Kaspar Hauser briefly lived after he was found, so it was claimed, living wild in the forest in the early years of the last century. The Toy Museum displays what may be the original Meccano



FACT FILE

■ Gareth Huw Davies travelled to Nuremberg with the German National Tourist Office and Lufthansa.
■ Lufthansa (0345 73747) flies direct to Nuremberg from Heathrow once daily at 8.30pm. Prices start at £192 return, which must include a Saturday night stay; otherwise from £466.
■ Operators offering Nuremberg Christmas market breaks include: Taber Holidays (01274 73561); three nights start at £298 per person and DER Travel Service (0171-290 111); three nights start at £489 per person.
■ Dürer Hotel: Neuturmstrasse 32 (00 49 911 20809); double room with breakfast £76-£86. Although December is busy in Nuremberg, the city's Tourist Board (00 49 911 33024) can arrange accommodation.
■ The Nuremberg Christkindlmarkt opens at 5.30pm on November 28 and runs until 1pm on December 24.
■ Some of the biggest markets in Germany are in Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, Cologne, Munich, and Stuttgart.
■ The German National Tourist Office, 65 Curzon Street, London. W1Y 5NE (0891 600100). Premium rates. Fax 0171-495 6129.

set, developed by local toy manufacturers.

Nuremberg has two fine high Gothic churches. St Lorenz and St Sebald, close together and similar. This was a free city and one of Europe's first civic democracies, so the citizenry saw no reason to smash up the contents in the Reformation. The churches' treasures were hidden before the bombers struck. Most of St Lorenz was destroyed.

Outside, the 19th-century German National Museum is the *Way of Human Rights* by the Israeli sculptor Dani Karavan. It struck me as an eloquent response to the Nuremberg Laws and other outrages perpetrated in the city's name. Thirty pillars and a tree stand in a row; each pillar represents a nation where human rights have been, or are being, violated (the leaves on the tree stand for the nations left out), and each is inscribed with one of the 30 articles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

I decide to send myself forth into the Christmas season with a last visit to the market. On Königstrasse the four French horns were still playing lustily; rapid, ornamented Baroque music keeps you warm. A trombone ensemble played *Angels from the Realms of Glory*. And the Christmas card artist's fantasy fulfilled — a single snowflake brushed against my cheek.

Christmas markets, page 26



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Christmas markets: they have long been a success in Germany and Austria and now British cities are copying the idea



Christmas is big business in Vienna, where the markets run for longer than in Britain

Shopping in a Viennese whirl

The Viennese, having shopped 'til they dropped in department stores, head for the markets which spring up around the city for Advent and the countdown to Christmas.

When we visited, the famous Viennese coffee houses were crammed with exhausted but victorious shoppers rewarding themselves with large helpings of chocolate sachertorte, washed down by small, expensive cups of coffee. Then, their shopping fever unabated, they turned their attention to one of the many markets dedicated to the festive season.

Neat wooden huts (none of your plastic sheeting here) in even nearer lines held displays of every imaginable Christmas tree light, decoration, candle and wooden toy. Anyone who was still hungry could rely on a steady supply of mulled wine, pretzels, hot potatoes and chestnuts.

The market of markets takes place each year in the courtyard at Schönbrunn, the summer palace of the Habsburgs, a short underground ride from the city centre.

The attraction of Schönbrunn is the apartments of Sisi, Empress Elizabeth, the much-loved princess who died from an assassination attempt in 1898. Next year, Vienna mounts a series of centenary exhibitions and events in her honour.

When we arrived at the market, throngs of people were already shopping with gusto in the courtyard below the elegantly floodlit palace, or leaning against the bar of a mulled wine hut.

Christmas is big business in Vienna, regardless of the religious significance it may have for the country's overwhelmingly Catholic population. In a city radiating such Christmas goodwill, the sight of three armed policemen standing around their patrol car in a quiet cobbled square came as a shock. But this was Friday evening off the Judengasse, or Jews' Street. The police have stood guard since last year's murder of two worshippers at the city's synagogue by Palestinian extremists.

Orthodox Jews in long black coats and

fur hats ignored the police as they hurried into the synagogue through the cold winter air. The police were joking among themselves but their presence served as a salutary reminder that, even in proudly low-crime Vienna, there are undercurrents of conflict.

Nearer to the centre, in front of the town hall, the stalls of the Christkindlmarkt fill the Rathauspark every day in the month leading up to Christmas.

And there are also workshops for making and baking presents and special sideshows for children. At night this shopping extravaganza continues, and the atmosphere of the illuminated market is quite magical.

Smaller and more traditional is the Alt Wiener Christkindlmarkt at the Freyung, while other Christmas markets can be found at the Heiligenkreuzerhof and in the Spittelberg pedestrian area.

SARA MCCONNELL

FACT FILE

■ Sara McConnell travelled with Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts and Lauda Air.

■ Heart of the City weekends are available at the Hotel Inter-Continental Wien at Johannesgasse 28, Vienna, including a room for two. Prices start at £97. For reservations call 0345 581 444.

■ Lauda Air prices start at £178 return Gatwick-Vienna, or from £162 Manchester-Vienna. Flights must be purchased seven days ahead. For reservations call 0845 6077737.

Festive cheer in Lincolnshire

Gareth Huw Davies discovers how glühwein can take the stress out of all that shopping

Looming over its miles of low-lying countryside, Lincoln is one of the most surprising cities in England — and for a few days in winter, it also becomes one of the most continental.

In early December, the streets of the ancient centre — between the west front of the superb, 900-year-old cathedral and the even older castle — are transformed into a bustling enclave of Central Europe. Lincoln's successful replication of the German and Austrian Christmas market is being observed by other cities, eager to fill the slow period for tourism.

This winter, Edinburgh inaugurates its own week-long Christmas market. Other towns and cities have started smaller markets, as councillors return from fact-finding trips to their twin towns with news of how even small towns in Germany put a warm glow into their civic bosoms in December.

I went from London to Lincoln for the market last winter. Mindful of potential traffic chaos because of the influx of visitors from all over the East Midlands, I turned my trip into a pleasant afternoon excursion by train from King's Cross.

This is an appropriate way to arrive in a cathedral city: just two hours after a leisurely haul through the flat fenlands, and tea on the train, we pulled into the charmingly antique station, with its graceful period details — semaphore signals, crenellated wooden eaves, golden bricks and grey and red metalwork.

Christmas markets are a joyous illusion, reminiscent of a cosier time in an indeterminate past. They work best beneath warm evening light in "heritage" civic settings. The illusion began to take effect in the film-set railway station. I decided to walk rather than dispel the mood by taking a taxi, which would have driven me up the ugly canyon of a bypass that keeps central Lincoln probably more traffic-free than at any time since the Middle Ages. To find the market, I had only to head for

the sensationally illuminated cathedral on the hill. I walked under the Roman arch, Stonebow, along the Strait and the climb began. Up Steep Hill, where the cobbled way almost took off under my feet.

After a precipitous climb — I'm sure the shops here look for rising, as well as passing, trade — I reached the uplands.

In Castle Square, a young clarinetist negotiated the second movement of Mozart's concerto in A Major. Coins tinkled down. Stalls spilled out of the castle grounds, into the surrounding streets and pressed up against the west door of the cathedral. This market has very quickly reached bursting point. It cannot grow any more, at least not spatially. The only expansion available is to let it run longer.

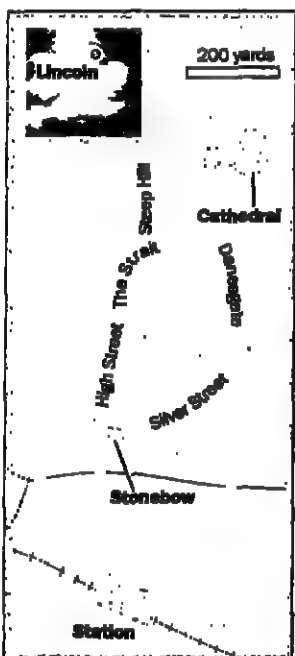
As in the German markets, a quarter of the 200 stalls sell food. The organisers paid due acknowledgment to their inspiration, ensuring ample supplies of Teutonic fare, including unquenchable vats of glühwein, chestnuts and mince pies.

The stalls, a third of them run by professional traders, sell the familiar range of jewellery, craft items and seasonal decorations. There is a big involvement by volunteers and fund raisers. Last year, for example, the Lions Club sold 18,000 lanterns. The market, now in its 16th year, is the city's biggest single tourist event and has won it three awards for off-peak tourism.

The model for the event came from its German twin, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, which also supplied the recipe for Lincoln's potent glühwein.

The market organisers wisely refrained from drawing a theme from the history that surrounds them in the shape of Roman remains, Norman castle and medieval cathedral. Instead, they opted for a vaguely Dickensian feel, dressing anyone official in Victorian costume.

There were street entertainers and big, wholesome fairground rides like steam gallopers. This year there will



FACT FILE

■ Lincoln Tourist Information (01522 529828). Information about Lincoln's Christmas Market is on 01522 511300.

National rail inquiries 0345 494950; a day return from London to Lincoln costs £29.50 for travel starting after 9.30am.

■ Other, smaller, city events include York's St Nicholas Fayre, from Nov 27 to 30; markets and craft stalls in the heart of the city. Worcester's Victorian Christmas market, in the city centre, runs from Dec 4-6. Lancaster has a festival of Christmas trees: shops will place a decorated tree in their windows, to be judged on December 12. Rochester's Dickensian Fair occupies the High Street on December 6-7. Ring 0800 192192 to find the number of your local tourist information centre.



A woodcraft stall in Lincoln. Handmade toys have proved as popular in Britain as they are in German markets

be a touch of pre-war Vienna, in the shape of a 33-metre-high ferris wheel.

Lincoln (and most of the British Christmas markets for that matter), disappointingly, does not match the German markets on length or timing. Nuremberg's market, for example, begins in late November and closes at lunchtime on Christmas Eve. Lincoln's four-day market (December 4-7 this

year) ends 18 days before Christmas Day. This, apparently, is because volunteers cannot be expected to give up weeks of their time. In addition, organisers are anxious to spare residents an extended assault by visitors.

The timing, at the start of December, results from the obsession with early Christmas shopping in Britain. In previous years, when the mar-

ket was held closer to Christmas, traders found visitors came only to browse, having completed their shopping.

If Lincoln was the prototype market, Edinburgh's is one of the first of the production models. The inaugural Christmas market will be held in Princes Street Gardens, with the floodlit castle as backdrop. It opens on December 6 and runs until the 14th.

The organisers, supported by the city council and Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise, gathered ideas at last year's Christmas market in Vienna. "We decided it could be done here, but slightly differently, and smaller," said a spokeswoman. Edinburgh's will be a continental-style Christmas market with 40 stalls selling things that are not on sale in Princes Street. Festive demon-

strations will include present-wrapping and cocktail-making. However, through some perversity of Scottish law, you won't be able to buy glühwein out of doors — only in covered marquees.

It will be some years before Britain's Christmas markets rival their German models, but even now they are offering a gentle introduction to the festive season.

WEB WORLD CHRISTMAS MARKETS

WHERE DO I START?
www.nuernberg.de/events/events.html offers a brief intro to Nuremberg's Christmas Market, while the sparklingly starry site at www.christkindlmarkt.at/english/index.htm does the same for Vienna. For a listing of North European events leading up to Christmas, including the markets, check out www.senaeurope.com/events.htm or, for the sole British equivalent, to www.britishadventures.com/britain/2.htm. **KER-CHING! THE BEST DEAL:** For the Hidden Christmas Markets six-day tour in Germany and Strasbourg, from £590 (flights extra) visit www.europe.com/hidden/index.html. For a general pick of the best Christmas holiday deals drop by the products.computer.co.uk/ukinsight/page5.htm site. **TRAVELLERS' TALES:** Read messages and queries from past happy



shoppers at the Nuremberg Market at www.nuernberg.de/events/ckm96/gruesse.e.html complete with electronic rendering of Silent Night or post your own by emailing webmaster@nuernberg.de. See for yourself what Vienna market looks like with photos from Europe's first photography on the web — www.atnet.co.at/viennaslide/7361.htm. Lincoln's Christmas Market may not be online yet but for a personal guide to Lincoln and its other attractions, check out Michelle Barnes's site at www.hermes2.demon.co.uk/lincoln1.htm. **MUGGING-UP:** For a look at Christmas Markets, go to www.eurogastronomy.com/EN/chap1/themes.html "WELL, I NEVER". Check out live camera footage of the Christmas Market at Nuremberg, at www.christkindlmarkt.de/live/index.e.html

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Club Med has shaken off its swinging singles image in Israel, as Winifred Blackmore discovered

When Eilat was first mooted as our holiday destination, I was sceptical. Eilat? I could not even pronounce it, let alone pinpoint it on the map. And Club Med? The name conjured up visions of swinging — French — singles purchasing exotic cocktails with beads. Surely not the place for your basic boring, English family with two children?

However, Club Med has matured over the years — even mellowed. Resorts are now clearly labelled: singles, couples and, yes, families. Even the beads have gone, abandoned because younger guests had a nasty habit of eating them.

The Club Med at Coral Beach, just up the road from Eilat on the southernmost tip of Israel, is a good example of the new family resort, where guests tailor their holiday to their needs. Sick to death of your kids? Fine. Check them into the Mini Club. Club Med's answer to daycare.

Then head for the gym or the beach, confident that they are learning some exciting new skill like archery or mini-golf under the expert supervision of the *Gentle Organisers* (GOs) — the groups of young, beautiful and exceptionally hard-working staff.

On the other hand, you are anxious to spend time with your offspring, that is all right, too. At Club Med, nobody has to join in and nobody is made to feel like a party-pooper for not participating.

Do not go to Club Med expecting high-tech. There is — guess — no television. My children, who see the television as the sixth member of our family (after the dog), could hardly believe this. There is also no room service.

Club Med works hard at promoting the image of the hotel as haven: a place where you and your children can be pampered and kept out of harm's way. This takes some getting used to — but persevere. By about Day Three, when your child wanders off for the umpteenth time, you



The Coral Beach resort near the Negev desert in southern Israel is a holiday destination that manages to be both child-friendly and exotic with dolphins offshore and desert camel rides

will not care. The GOs keep a discreet but vigilant eye on young guests and children are encouraged to be independent. Those aged eight and over are allowed the freedom of the hotel — provided parents give their permission. Most do.

Almost as hard to get used to is the scenery. The hotel at Coral Beach looks out across the Gulf of Eilat to the Red Mountains of Jordan. They have a raw look, as though somebody has peeled the skin back, exposing the flesh beneath. In the distance, if you crane your neck, you can see Saudi Arabia.

Turn right outside the hotel, going past the camel-ride man, head down the dusty road for ten miles and you hit Egypt. Even the trip from the airport takes you past King Solomon's Mountains (pink with brown stripes like some giant cassata). The whole desert looks like the red section from an artist's palette: burnt umber and ochre, terracotta and sienna.

There are indications that this is not just another holiday destination, but an important border town in a country not



WINTER SUN

known for loving its neighbours: an army checkpoint, a Jeep full of soldiers along a border patrol route. But it is not, as I feared, menacing or oppressive. Indeed, given the bloody terrorist attacks on tourists in neighbouring Egypt, the presence of these tough, unsmiling Israeli troops is actually reassuring.

Back at the hotel there is plenty to please. Lie back and sunbathe by the heated pool. For those who prefer the sea, there is a private beach conveniently close to a coral reef and mind-boggling snorkelling. If you fancy learning to windsurf, just make sure you do not get blown across the Gulf into Jordanian waters — or you might wind up being escorted back to your hotel by

a gunboat. There is also tennis, archery and a well equipped fitness room.

Then there is the food. At Club Med, eating is not just a diversion: it is the focus of the day. Almost an Olympic event really, helped no doubt by the fact that all meals are included in the cost of your package. Breakfast, with brioches, crepes and croissants, merges into lunch, which blurs into dinner.

The main hotel restaurant, French in style, is fine, but the best-kept secret is the Menora, the kosher restaurant set on the edge of the beach. The food is sublime: Middle Eastern dips with pitta bread, steak and chicken grilled before your eyes, and falafel that bear no resemblance to the desiccated golf balls you find in this country.

Outside the hotel, there are plenty of things to do and see. Club Med has its own excursion office where guests can book outings at special rates, ranging from Dolphin Reef (a PC attraction, a part of the sea where dolphins are kept, no humiliating Flipper tricks) to overnight treks to such places as Petra and Jerusalem. Some of the trips were prohibitively

expensive or unsuitable for children.

However, one excursion suitable for families is the camel desert tour, based at the Wadi Scholomo camel ranch just five minutes from the hotel. Tourists are given half an hour's tuition in the rudiments of camel riding — "hook your leg round the pommel and hang on for dear life" — followed by a jaunt through the Arava desert.

The prospect of swaying for several hours atop a two-foot

hump-backed dromedary filled me with dread. But once I realised I was not going to fall off and that Mona, my trusty camel, knew the way with her long-lashed eyes shut, the thrill and the strangeness overwhelmed me.

Take-offs and landings were disconcerting. My eight-year-old daughter, Siân, who rode double with me, insisted it was better if you closed your eyes, but you will want to keep them wide open the rest of the time. The price is about £75 for

two grown-ups and two children, and includes the cost of a Bedu meal. The tours go twice a day, but take the afternoon trip if you can. Watching the sun sink over the painted mountains and riding home under the desert stars is unforgettable.

For those who want to travel further afield without paying for the expensive and adult-orientated Club Med guide, rent a car (this, too, can be arranged by the hotel) and drive to the Dead Sea. The 2½-

hour trip through the desert really is as straightforward as everybody tells you: just follow the main road until your ears start to pop and you get to the peculiar milky-blue water.

Once at the seaside, do not be deterred by the signs which tell you not to dive head first into the water, splash or ingest any of it or by the fact that, as my daughter put it, the whole place "smells like bad scrambled eggs". Like Eilat, it is well worth the risk.



Winifred Blackmore and her daughter Siân get to know Mona

FACT FILE

■ Winifred Blackmore travelled to Coral Beach, Eilat, with Club Med (0171-581 1161), which offers Sunday departures from Luton and Monday departures from Heathrow to Ovda, from which there is a one-hour transfer.

■ Prices, which include flights, transfers, full board (including drinks with meals), sports and sports tuition, children's clubs, entertainment and insurance, start at £606 (adult), £541 (12-17 years), £434 (6-11), £366 (2-5 years) for one week.

■ Club Med also offers free stays for children at off-peak times. Coral Beach is closed for refurbishment and opens on December 21.

■ Who goes there? In summer: Pyrex-like Israelis not minding 50-degree heat. In winter: Diving fans. Sun- and sex-starved northern Europeans. Israeli OAPs. London cabbies.

■ Getting the ball rolling: Call the Israeli Tourist Office on 0171-299 1111. On the Internet, visit <http://www.israel.com/tour>

■ Perfect timing: 350 sunny days a year, so hard to miss out on a tan. To avoid being overbaked, stick to "cooler" months outside Jun-Jul-Aug.

■ Unlike Atlantic resorts, sea is always warm.

■ Subtleties: Take out long, light trousers for camel-riding, hat for desert trips. Bring back Adidas gear (Israeli-made, so it's relatively cheap). Only local liquor is good value — with uplifting names like *Hallelujah!*

■ Pound in your pocket: 5.5 shekels to the pound. Can pay with credit cards, sterling or dollars nearly everywhere. Don't change money in commission shops don't charge commission.

■ Turn of phrase: Forget "desert" as sand-dunes: think spectacular coloured mountains, risen by a million wadis (dry river beds). "Shalom", or "peace" is



EILAT

Israeli music — Europop but worse — more Falafel Fools than Spice Girls.

■ Not to be missed: Scuba-diving, with dolphins at Dolphin Reef. Stimulating freefall over a jet engine at Airodrom. Camel-trek into King Solomon's Wadi.

■ Way to go: Only El Al (0171-957 4100) offers £119 return charter fares from Gatwick. If flying from Israel, call domestic carrier Arkia (00 972 3690 3472).

■ Any good packages? Peltours (0181-343 0590) currently has best deal: £229pp for a week B&B. Thomson, through Portland Direct (0990 002200), charges £295 for a week B&B at Hotel Caesar. For luxury, Longwood Travel (0181-551 4494) offers the best price for a week at King Solomon Palace (£369) or at the Dan Hotel (£479).

■ Don't eat: No smoking in kosher restaurants on the Sabbath. Don't demand milk in your coffee: hotel restaurants are all kosher and don't serve dairy products with meat. Don't joke or bridle at the airport security checks: those guys have no sense of humour, but they are there for your good.

■ Nasty surprises: Like Eilat flies. "dir-ec" Israelis are pushy and in your face.

SUSANNAH JOWITT

Once you have seen the world you can always go to Greenland, so the somewhat dated saying goes. In our opinion we would rather go to Greenland in preference to most places in the world and if you feel the same way you should consider joining us on a late summer expedition cruise aboard the specially adapted *Molchanov*.

We will sail with just over 40 passengers from Iceland, across the Denmark Strait to Ammassalik in East Greenland. Here we will begin a voyage around the fjords and islands of the south, following in the wake of the great Norse settlers who risked life and limb some 900 years ago when they left the shores of Iceland and Norway.

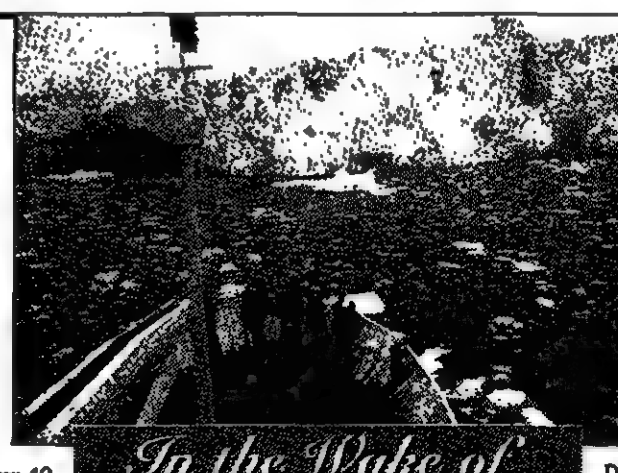
Coastal Greenland is marvellous to behold. Great towering cliffs, walls of glacial ice, winding fjords, vast ice-sheets and flowing glaciers. It is one of the last great wilderness areas where, to date, man has made little difference to the landscape and tourists are still a rarity. For most visitors their first encounter with Greenland is a humbling experience as they witness nature in the raw and look out across a magnificent Arctic world.

PROFESSOR MOLCHANOV

Built in Finland in 1983 for the former Soviet Union's programme of polar and oceanographic research, she was refurbished in 1994 and fully fitted in 1996 for expeditionary travel. She is a comfortable and well equipped vessel with an ice-strengthened hull, making her ideal for polar waters.

Accommodating a maximum of 52 passengers, the *Professor Molchanov* is 233 feet in length, has a displacement of 2140 tons and is manned by an experienced and enthusiastic Russian crew. On board there is the latest sophisticated navigation and communication equipment and the vessel has the comfort of a passive stabilisation system.

Public areas include a lounge, bar, library, clinic, sauna and an open bridge. The hearty and excellent meals, supervised by European staff, are served in two dining rooms. There are large open decks and with only a maximum of just over 50 passengers, the vessel even when full has a peaceful and roomy atmosphere. The walkers will rejoin the repositioned



In the Wake of ERIC THE RED

AN EXPEDITION CRUISE TO SOUTHERN GREENLAND ABOARD THE PROFESSOR MOLCHANOV 5th to 15th September 1998



Looking after the day to day programme aboard will be the expedition leader and his team. There will be no formal entertainment, but the expedition team will organise briefings and talks and the library will be equipped with a good selection of reading and board/card games. For our forays ashore we will use the vessel's Zodiac craft allowing us great flexibility and the ability to reach otherwise inaccessible places with great ease. This is a voyage undertaken in the spirit of discovery, with a view to making your experience an extraordinary one.

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Day 1 London to Reykjavik. Early afternoon flight with Icelandair. Drive to the *Molchanov* at nearby Keflavik. Embark and sail.

Day 2 At sea. Crossing the Denmark Strait.

Day 3 Ammassalik. Situated on an island which lies across the mouth of a fjord, Ammassalik is the main population centre on the vast East Greenland Coast. The town and surrounding region supports approximately 5,000 souls in an extraordinarily beautiful area. There will be an opportunity to explore the town and also for a walk through some stunning scenery of lakes and waterfalls. The walkers will rejoin the repositioned

vessel in Sermilik Fjord. Day 4 Sermilik Fjord. A day of exploration in this vast fjord looking out for narwhals and icebergs. We will also visit a small settlement.

Days 5 & 6 South East Greenland Coast. Today this magnificent, deeply indented and ice-covered coastline is uninhabited. We will make a couple of forays ashore in the ice-free places such as Sigdoldungen and Tingimarmilik, where we will find remains of old Eskimo settlements.

Day 7 Prins Christian's Sund. We will enter this fjord with its towering mountainous sides as a short-cut to the West Coast and the Herjolfsnes settlement. This is thought to be the place of the first Norse village in Greenland. See the 13th century church which was excavated in the 1920's and some well preserved examples of Norse clothing which were discovered in the permafrost under the church. This was probably the first trading post in Greenland and dates back to the 10th century.

Day 8 Unartoq Island/Nanortalik. On the island of Unartoq you can swim and hike in Greenland's finest natural hot springs (42°C) amidst wonderful scenery in its autumnal colours. Later visit the largest collection of Inuit ruins in West Greenland. Time permitting we will also visit Nanortalik, a charming town with a delightful picture-postcard harbour, set against the immense granite peaks and spires of the surrounding mountains.

Days 9 & 10 At sea. Excellent opportunities to see the migration of the northern birds and the chance of witnessing the splendour of the Northern Lights.

Day 11 Keflavik to London. Disembark after breakfast and return to London with Icelandair, arriving in the late morning.

Prices per person from £1895 in a twin bedded cabin and from £2395 for a single cabin. Price includes: Economy class air travel, 10 nights aboard the *Prof. Molchanov* on full board, shore excursions, entrance fees, transfers, landing fees, port taxes, expedition staff, UK departure tax. Not included: Travel insurance, airport taxes, gratuities.

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SKI WEEKEND: TAKING THE CHILDREN

Sloping off in a class of their own



Don't say cheese, say fromage: some members of the junior ski school at Val d'Isère line up with their instructor to be immortalised in their class photograph; extra courses are organised in many resorts during the school holidays

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Choose a resort which is friendly to families and you can feel sure your children will be in safe hands, says

Felice Eyston

It was the nightmare of every skiing parent. I was on an icy mountain road in the gathering dusk standing beside a broken-down hire car. My children would be waiting for me at the ski school, by now deserted. In the small French resort of Vaujany, at least a half-a-dozen bends away on the road above me.

Six hours earlier, in glorious April sunshine, I had left my youngest son, Barney, in the kindergarten and Max, eight, with his ski class, before going to explore a neighbouring resort. I planned to return in plenty of time to retrieve them both at 4pm. But a sudden change in the weather covered the approach road with 18 inches of fresh snow.

I had fixed chairs, but halfway back one of them snapped and wrapped itself around the axle. By the time I reached my hotel on foot — cold, sodden and concerned — darkness had fallen.

My worry was needless. The ski teacher had contacted the English nanny from Ski Peak,

our tour operator. She had scooped up the boys and there they were, fed and watered, and happily playing before bedtime. It was a dramatic reminder that absolutely no aspect of a family skiing holiday should be left to chance. The younger your children, the more important it is to choose a resort and a tour operator geared towards families.

Your first task is to select a country. Austria has attractive villages which, typically, have onion-domed churches, gentle slopes and family-run hotels. France offers some of the best-equipped crèches in the Alps, with sparkling nurseries and fenced-off outdoor play areas. Although my top three family resorts are in France, I have encountered surly staff there which can more than offset a kindergarten's good points. It is not unusual to see weary parents (myself included) desperately trying to deposit their unwilling — and often screaming — offspring at a kindergarten.

In Italy, three generations of the same family tend to holiday together, with the result that crèche facilities are usually non-existent. So unless you can take along a nanny or granny, you are probably better advised to look elsewhere. Switzerland has higher prices, although sterling's strength has made it more affordable this year, and the wonderfully efficient staff make you feel that the extra cost is justified.

A newcomer to the British family skiing market is Norway, which is fast becoming one of the most child-friendly countries. Safety is taken seriously here, with helmets actively encouraged and children's ski areas closed to adults.

Isabella, my 18-month-old daughter, loved the Troll Club kindergarten in Geilo, where each day she was swept up

into the ample arms of a smiling Norwegian girl — and forgot about me as soon as her back was turned.

The ski school was well organised and all the instructors spoke good English. To the delight of my six-year-old, Barney, all the members of his class were given colourful Lycra Viking hats to cover their helmets.

Slopeside childcare in Canada and the United States is a long way ahead of the Alpine equivalent. Each resort has facilities for all ages, the staff really seem to make time for your child and the kindergarten are always flexible.

GETTING IT

HAVING picked your resort, you must then decide where to stay. Chalets offer the most practical solution for a family wishing to provide tea after skiing followed by an early children's supper.

It may be cheaper to rent an apartment, but the downside is that someone has to do the shopping and cooking while at the same time trying to enjoy a holiday.

hardly a relaxing experience if you have to spend your time preventing your little ones from disturbing other guests.

AS expert care is required, nannies employed by specialist tour operators are the best solution. Baby accessories such as cots, potties, baby alarms, bottle-warmers and

sterilisers are bulky to take along, so check they are provided. Trying to buy your usual brand of nappies or milk formula in a resort can be difficult, and the French do not appear to use baby wipes, so take your own.

THE ideal age to learn to ski. A tour operator's "ski school escort service" or afternoon "kids' club" is invaluable. Under this system, nannies pick children up from ski school for lunch and then either deliver them back at lessons in the afternoon or entertain them with making snowmen, walks, tobogganing, ice-skating and games until the end of the adults' skiing day.

THEY will need ski courses or snowboarding lessons. Club Med was the first to run evening clubs so parents could relax before dinner. Other tour operators are following. Continued on page 29



Learning about the snow business: children in the kindergarten at Avoriaz get to play around with toboggans

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SKI WEEKEND: TAKING THE CHILDREN

Child's play on the nursery slopes

Jane Owen whisks her daughters off for an Alpine odyssey — taking care that they are not witness to her first skiing efforts in eight years

It is a white-out at the top of a red run in St Anton on my first morning's skiing for eight years. And I am sharing this experience with a group of strangers: the head of a light industrial company, the head of a record company, an accountant to the stars.

You get the picture: Big Cheeses with wobbly knees. We share a common bond: we all have children.

In fact, we all have small children, many of whom have never before skied, and we all want to ski — so we have chosen a holiday with one of several companies now trying to meet the needs of the family. I am the exception because I am a single parent.

Like me, my children are robust, but I have never been happy about letting them out of my sight on holiday since the time Rose, then aged three, managed to open the window of her fourth-floor bedroom and crawl out on to the parapet where she was spotted by a couple in a neighbouring hotel, waving happily. I was in the dining room downstairs, and the children were on listening service to the hotel reception.



Jane Owen with daughters Miranda and Rose, plus playmate Lucy and grandfather

Back on the internal (well, freezing) mountain, Rose, now seven, and Miranda, six, are several lift rides away on the nursery slopes with a nice instructor (French and non-combative) and a nanny from the Mark Warner Chalehotel Rosanna, where we are staying.

Fears about their safety are momentarily superseded by selfish fear of the slope in front with the rep shouting: "It's great, nobody else is here!"

Well, of course — nobody else is stupid enough to ski in a white-out with shushy snow. I have a spectacular 30-metre fall-bounce — and then cheer up, as I have beaten everyone else to the bottom.

Come lunchtime, Rose and Miranda are whisked away to our chalet by the nanny. I wobble across to Hospiz-Alm in St Christoph, where glorious young men in leather britches serve gargantuan platters — the spare ribs look like half a pig.

Of all the lunch places in the area, this is the best, and it has a built-in, adult-sized slide

down to the loo. Post-lunch and glühwein, I slip down (OK, I tumble and fall down) to the nursery slopes, where Rose and Miranda are doing pizza pies, known as snow ploughs in my day. No ski sticks of course, and quite happy.

A nanny, spotting me lurking near the nursery slopes pretending that I am waxing my skis/doing warm-up exercises, patiently explains, using all her copious diplomatic skills, that Rose and Miranda are very happy.

They can choose sledging or snowman-making or anything else during the afternoon and should anything happen to them — which it won't — they will be able to reach me. OK, OK, so I should stop interfering.

All children are collected at about 4 o'clock whether or not the parents have been interfering. By this time, the ski boots are back in the drying room and the children are in dry clothes. Magically.

I have had nothing to do with this laborious process. Parents bring offspring to high tea at five-ish, all prepared and set out by the nannies (the tea, that is).

Bath, reading and bed for Rose and Miranda, and when

FACT FILE

- Jane Owen travelled with Mark Warner Holidays (0171-393 3168). Prices at the Chalehotel Rosanna, St Anton, which sleeps up to 89, start at £399 for one week per adult (based on two sharing a room, including flights, accommodation, half-board and transfers) and rise to £787 during school half-term holidays in February. Cost for a child between the ages of 2 and 15, sharing parents' room, is £200 less than the adult price.
- Ski and boot hire from Ski Sport Fauser, 6580 St Anton a Arlberg, Tirol, Austria (00 43 5446 2413) costs £64 per child and £95 per adult.

coach from the airport (children's videos all the way, much to the disgust of some of the child-free guests) and so I guess they might try to visit her while the grown-ups are revelling downstairs. No way. They are sound asleep, worn out by the skiing.

Older children — and mine were not completely exhausted — watch videos in the nursery while their parents dine downstairs.

Après ski... perhaps not. I felt too ancient, and anyway the company at the chalet was brilliant.

Some parents spend one day towards the end of the week skiing with the children. I vow never to let Rose and Miranda see me ski. It would put them off for life. And terribly them. So, while mums and dads whirl down slopes with little people between their legs, Rose and Miranda and I take a day out to build snowmen and go window-shopping.

Parents (and one set of grandparents) I spoke to gave almost full marks to this child-and-parent-friendly holiday. The only complaints were the quality of the inclusive wine (staggering in every sense) and the fact that the charter flight was a day late on the return journey.



Never too young to start: and when children tire of the slopes, they can always go sledging or make a snowman

Continued from page 28

with Snowbiz Vacances (01778 341455) offering a Junior Ski Club for six to ten-year-olds. The Ski Club of Great Britain (0181-410 2000) has "specials" in the school holidays and at half-term. Top Ski (00 334 7906 1480) in Val d'Isère arranges courses for children: The Thomson British Ski Academy in Les Houches, France (01932 242882) is for budding racers.

TOUR OPERATOR crèches generally take over the whole floor of an apartment or chalet, or a large hotel room. They are staffed by qualified nannies.



Young skiers are high on the agenda at many resorts

ski, but not all of it at exorbitant prices. Val d'Isère, Courchevel, St Anton and Verbier are the hottest resorts for this age group. Club Med (0171-581 1161) has a flexible programme for teenagers during the French school holidays and McGarry's Teen Top Race Clinics (0181-399 5823) are held in Châtel.

TOUR OPERATOR crèches generally take over the whole floor of an apartment or chalet, or a large hotel room. They are staffed by qualified nannies.

and most will care for children from six months to six years of age. The opening hours are approximately 9am to 4.30pm. A good crèche should provide all the baby hardware, as well as toys, games, materials for creative play, books and videos. Before booking a nanny service you need to ask:

- Is the company offering its own service with an NNEB or equivalent qualified nanny, or is the crèche the local kindergarten in disguise?
- Is the service for five or six days? As a week's holiday constitutes six full days, childcare needs to cover the whole period, otherwise you will be left holding the baby.
- Is lunch provided? It is inconvenient to have to collect your children at lunchtime and return them afterwards, particularly in a large ski area. At the best crèches, staff escort children from morning ski school, give them lunch, and either return them to their class or care for them until the end of the day.
- Check how many children are looked after by each nanny. Ratios of nannies to children vary, with operators quoting an average of one nanny to two or three babies (under two years), or one nanny to three or four children (aged two to five).
- Some tour operators employ private nannies who might ideally be shared by two families. The nanny will come to your chalet with toys and games, take your children for walks and cook lunch.
- If you are staying in a chalet, the staff will normally prepare an early supper for children and your tour operator or the local tourist office should be able to arrange evening babysitting.

CHEESES AND CONDIMENTS

THESE may be less flexible than the tour operator versions, and staff fluency in English varies. I was 15 minutes late taking my son to a crèche in France and was told that he therefore could not join the morning session and should return after lunch, which meant no skiing for me.

The North American kindergartens are the leaders by a long stretch, although one French resort is their equal: the state-of-the-art Garderie in Vaujany. Here children can be dropped off and collected at any time of day, and older children are accompanied between crèche and ski school.

WHAT TO TAKE

WHEN taking children for the first time, borrow clothing from friends and hire boots and skis in the resort. But it is worth investing in a warm ski jacket which is useful for the journey, after skiing and at home. A jacket and salopettes are more flexible than a one-piece suit and essentials include Thinsulate or Gore-Tex mittens, a hat and goggles. Helmets are vital for pre-teens, and do not send your child out skiing with sunscreen of less than factor 15, whatever the weather.

In North America, you will almost definitely experience much lower temperatures than in Europe, with the east coast resorts and Canada the coldest of all. Your children will need glove liners to wear under mittens, plus thermal vests and long johns or an all-in-one fleece.

The Canadian skiwear manufacturer Couloir is known for its scientific clothing for adults, and you can now buy child-sized versions in branches of Snow & Rock (mail order: 01932 569569) at £99.95 for a one-piece suit.

SKIING

FLYING is the quickest, but often the most stressful, way to travel. Avoid resorts with long airport-transfer times. Driving to the French Alps may be easier and cheaper — with two drivers you can tackle the journey in a single day. Eurostar (0345 303030) is a serious contender with a day-time Saturday service from Waterloo to Mothers and Bourg-St-Maurice.

If you are hiring a car at the other end, take your own baby seat. The extra rental cost is outrageous and the seat provided is rarely the right size.

The following tour operators have a crèche or nanny service.

- Airtravels (01706 260000) Snowflake Club at Les Deux Alpes five days a week.
- Club Med (0171-581 1161) Sixteen holiday villages with own crèches and ski schools six days a week. Cot and potty provided in every bedroom, sterilisers and food mixers available.
- Collingridge (01276 24262) Small, flexible operator to Chamonix Valley with a nanny and local au pair.
- Crystal (0181-399 5144) Nanny service five days a week in 13 resorts. One night's free babysitting. Escort service, lunchtime care for older children.
- Inglands (0181-780 4444) Shared nanny service in 11 resorts five to six days per week. Private nannies available.
- Mark Warner (0171-393 3131) Crèches in six resorts six days per week. Childminding and ski school escort service. Free evening babysitting service.
- Meraki (01451 844788) Crèche in Méribel six days per week with escort service. Private nannies available.
- Neilson (0990 994444) Kindergartens in four resorts six days per week. Chalet nanny service in three resorts.

OPERATORS

- Powder Byrne (0181-671 3300) Free crèche for hotel guests in Flims; also in Grindelwald and Zermatt part of the season. Ski school escort service. Babysitting and private nannies available.
- Silver Ski (01622 735344) Crèche at La Plagne six days a week, with escort service.
- Simply Ski (0181-742 2541) Crèches at Montchavin and Courchevel 1900. Clubs for older children, with ski school escorting and lunch. Private nanny service in Verbier. Babysitting one day per week in Courchevel and Montchavin.
- The Ski Company (0171-730 9600) Au pairs during high season. Children's supper and free babysitting.
- Ski Spirit (01252 616789) Specialist family operator with crèches six days a week in six resorts. Ski school lessons five days a week. Ski school escort service with lunch and activities. One night's free babysitting.
- Ski Famille (01223 363777) Free crèche in each of the five chalets in Les Gets on five days per week. Lunch provided if required. Ski school escort service on the sixth day.

- Ski Hillwood (0181-866 9993) Crèches in Les Gets and Sall six days a week. Escort service and after-skiing activities five days a week. Free child supervision six evenings per week.
- Ski Olympic (01302 390120) Flexible service with crèche with lunch in three resorts for six days per week.
- Ski Peak (01252 794941) Specialist operator to Vaujany with flexible crèche six days a week. Children's supper and babysitting by arrangement.
- Ski Scott Dunn (0181-767 0202) Crèche in Courchevel 1850, six days a week with lunch. Escort service for crèche, ski school and ski kindergarten. Private nanny service in Val d'Isère, Méribel and Zermatt.
- Snowbiz Vacances (01778 341455) Flexible crèche in Puy-St-Vincent six days per week, children bring their own lunch. Kids' club six evenings per week.
- Snowline Holidays (0181-870 4807) Nanny service in chalets and hotel in Champoussin including lunch.
- Thomson (0990 329329) Sixteen Family Choice resorts. Kids' Clubs in ten resorts. Après-ski care and entertainment three evenings a week. Babysitting by arrangement.

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BIRDS: WHERE AND WHEN



Eyes left: dedicated birders flock together in large numbers whatever the season, creating a spectacle of themselves



Paradise for twitchers: violet touraco, left, an African specialty, and the rarely seen white-backed night heron, right



Who's a pretty boy then: male rose-necked parakeet, inhabitant of The Gambia

Dawn chorus on a wing and a prayer

In the hour before daybreak, darkness intensifies, the insects fall silent, and The Gambia's tropical pungency declines to no more than a delicate, anemic trace. The streets are lifeless. Anyone with a mind to be up at this time of the morning could claim dominion over Banjul, for even the night-watchmen are asleep, curled tight in shuttered shop doorways.

Driving through the capital in the open back of a Land Rover, I have no such design. My primary purpose is to reach Lamin Lodge, a rustic riverside restaurant, before first light. With the eastern sky beginning to lighten, the vehicle's progress is ticked away by the pendulum swing of the binoculars dangling from my neck.

The lodge is a 30-minute drive south of Banjul, along the airport road and then a short stretch of

rutted dirt track. Eventually it appears ahead of us: an inky, ramshackle silhouette etched against the blossoming dawn.

On foot, I am directed across a pier to a creaky, Swiss Family Robinson piece of architecture built on two stilts over water. I am soon joined by 30 other tourists collected from a succession of beachside resorts and we sit hushed, sipping coffee and listening to the tentative first notes of the dawn chorus.

When there is enough light, we are ushered into a trio of dug-outs fashioned from the trunks of the kapok, Africa's largest tree, and cast off into what is now revealed to be a broad mangrove creek. The tide is steadily rolling in and the oarsmen — one to a boat — labour against it as they paddle us to midstream. Our departure is heralded by a fly-past of rose-necked parakeets.

Solomon, our guide, identifies a

dozen more birds while we struggle to look up the parakeets in our bird books. With a lifetime of experience, he can instantly identify species by their jizz — an instinctive amalgam of shape, sound and movement. Despite our more analytical approach, we never catch him out.

The mangrove channels fraying both banks of the River Gambia have contributed to this tiny nation's legend among international bird-watchers. More than 200 species (out of The Gambia's total of 540) have been recorded within these labyrinthine waterways.

Some of the birds are familiar: either winter migrants from Europe (accounting for a third of the country's species) or variations on common themes — pigeons, pied crows, black magpies and nine types of kingfisher.

There are also plenty of African specialties. For many of the partici-

pants, this voyage delivers first sightings of the violet touraco, the African harrier hawk and, engaged in a memorable mid-air tussle with a vociferous mob of grey-headed gulls, the palm-nut vulture.

As the sun lifts clear of the mangroves, the dawn chorus loses momentum and the avian traffic above us begins to ease. The boats glide drowsily forward. Solomon sits alert, picking out flutterings on either bank. Then, close to an islet, he stops the oarsmen, silences our idle chatter and points into the undergrowth.

The significance of what is going on is initially apparent only to the fundamentalist birders among us. Their urgent interest overwhelms any instincts to keep the boats on a steady keel. Focusing through binoculars, they lean and bob in search

of a clean view through the mess of vegetation; the dug-outs rock precariously.

I am slow to pick out the object of all this attention. Some moments pass before I spot a large eye gazing out from among the chaotic mangrove roots, and I am gradually able to decipher the form of our quarry. My field guide confirms it is, as Solomon assures us, a rarely seen white-backed night heron.

At the back of my boat, a pink-faced twitcher from Yorkshire declares himself to be "dead chuffed" with the encounter. "This is his second visit to The Gambia. He is already planning to come back for thirds," he said. "This is the birding gateway to Africa."

It is this gathering reputation that has encouraged The Gambia's tourist industry to begin developing ecotourism alongside the country's

well established package tours. The two are not mutually exclusive.

In the grounds of the Atlantic Hotel, I stalk away from the odours of suntan lotion and the splashes of divers in the swimming pool to explore the hotel's own bird garden. Here is a dappled, peaceful place all a-flutter with firefinches and red-cheeked cordon-bleus. In this nursery for budding twitchers, a whole new vocabulary can be learnt, and from here it is but a short step to dedicated birding safaris and Sam wake-up calls.

In the hotel lobby, the latest batch of package arrivals are checking in and I view them with fresh understanding. After all, what is the modern tour if not the latest incarnation of an ancient, natural instinct? When the European winter bites, fly south to Africa.

RICHARD NEWTON

FACT FILE

■ Richard Newton travelled with The Gambia Experience (01703 730685). The company operates birdwatching tours escorted by Clive Barlow, author of *Field Guide to Birds of the Gambia* (Pica Press, £26). The tours use the Banjul-based agent West African Tours.

■ A one-week birdwatching tour costs £774 between January



1-21. Prices rise to £866 at Easter, to include flights, all transport, two nights at the Atlantic Hotel and camp hut accommodation, on a half-board basis.

■ While birdwatching is a year-round activity in The Gambia, the best times to go are before the rains (which come in June), or during the winter months (Nov-Jan) for the best viewing of migrants.

Watch out for the bald spot

Skiing will bring more visitors to Whistler this winter than ever before. Most will miss the sign to Squamish. Whistler's poorer neighbour, on the Sea to Sky Highway 40 miles north of Vancouver. Yet the dense hemlock, fir and cedar forest abutting Route 99 conceals a spectacle worthy of a trip to the British Columbia coast.

Every year, between November and March, the world's greatest concentration of bald eagles descends on a few miles of the Squamish River. The birds come in their thousands from Alaska, the Yukon, northern British Columbia, Montana and Arizona, flying up to 4,000 miles at summer's end to feast on returning chum salmon. About 80 per cent of these eagles congregate on a six-mile stretch of the river and its tributaries, the Cheakamus and Marmquam. In 1994, 3,769 eagles were counted here on a single January day — the highest concentration of bald eagles in the world.

Bald eagles are rare birds. Though one of the United

Birders who yearn to see a bald eagle should visit the Squamish River, British Columbia, in winter

States' favourite symbols of strength and stability, the birds were hunted and poisoned to near-extinction before the 1960s. Even today few people, bird enthusiasts included, have ever seen a bald eagle so it is quite a thrill to see several, let alone hundreds, in a single day. The eagles, for their part, seem to be getting used to the sight of tourists dressed in orange life-jackets and perched precariously on the edge of lurid yellow rafts.

It is a typically damp, raw Squamish morning when we go eagle-spotting. The air is rank from the smell of rotting salmon on the gravel bars — the fish die in their hundreds of thousands after the long journey up the river to spawn.

Two groups of visitors spot their first bald eagle within minutes of taking to the water. The excitement appears to be one-sided as the bird sits unmoved by the noise of frantic whispers and a dozen

shutter releases. One of my fellow passengers wonders whether the eagle has seen us. Our guide explains that an eagle can see a rabbit move from a mile away, and that an eagle flying at 1,000 feet can see prey over an area of three square miles. The chances are it spotted us half an hour before we saw it.

Biologists from the Nature Conservancy of Canada have been studying the eagles' habits for four winters. The birds have been coming since the salmon began arriving to spawn — long before Captain George Vancouver set foot here in 1792; probably before the Squamish people began hunting in the valley they called Squamish, or "mother of the wind".

The Squamish is one of the few rivers that has a late chum run. The spoils represent a huge source of food accessible

from November through to February on a river that does not freeze. For the next three months eagles will daily gorge themselves, devouring up to a tenth of their body weight in fish — as much as half a kilo.

By the end of February the feast is over, but a few eagles remain in the valley for the summer. Breeding birds defend large territories to raise their young. In winter, territories break down, amply illustrated by crows perched under the weight of so many raptors, six or seven to a tree, perched like chandeliers.

From a raft it is hard to miss some of their habits. Eagles are creatures of precision. While gulls rip indiscriminately through rotting salmon carcasses, bald eagles first eat the eyes and then, via a swift incision, scoop out the brain. They appear to be little bothered by gulls and crows. A few take flight at the sight of our bright rafts but most remain regally on their perches, eyeing their next meal.

Pairs mate for life, though affairs are possible — usually in the first year of "marriage", according to biologists. Younger eagles (identified by their lack of white head plumage — bald eagles minus the bald spot) sit on lower branches, apparently leaving better vantage points for older birds.

By journey's end, estimates of bald eagles seen vary between 500 and 800 depending on which boat's crew you believe. But exact numbers do not matter — this is one of the great sights of nature.

NEVILLE JUDD

FACT FILE

■ Human encroachment on the eagles' habitat is an important part of scientists' research. Raking is considered one of the less obtrusive ways of seeing them: there are also eagle-watching programmes on foot with volunteer guides.

■ Eagles are best seen from viewing shelters on the Squamish River at Brackendale, north of Squamish off Highway 99. Eagle warden volunteers are available 9:30am-3:30pm on weekends from December 13 to February 15. For more information, including accommodation details, call the Squamish Chamber of Commerce (604 604 892 9244).

■ The Canadian Outback Adventure Company (800 565 8733) offers guided river raft trips for about £45 (£60 with transport including lunch). It also offers "Eagle Festival" two-night packages with Vancouver hotel accommodation.

■ Brackendale-based Sunwell Outdoor Centre (604 604 898 1537) offers a "Sleep with Eagles" package for about £25 for two (double occupancy), with cabin accommodation and boat trip.

■ The eagle population peaks in early January, when Brackendale hosts the month-long Winter Eagle Festival.

■ Squamish is between Vancouver and Whistler and less than an hour's drive on Highway 99 from either. It is better known to climbers for the Stawamus Chief, the world's second largest monolith after the Rock of Gibraltar.



Spot the birdie: bald eagles can see their prey over an area of three square miles

WHERE TO SPOT A BIRD IN WINTER

FOR most birders the dream destination has to be the Seychelles. With 115 islands to choose from, the best choice is a combination of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. From here, additional day excursions can be made to Cousin and Aride. For the unforgettable experience of seeing more than a million sooty terns on their nests, an overnight stay on Bird Island is recommended.

However, the ultimate "Grip-off" (slang for incurring the envy of all your colleagues) is to see the Seychelles magpie robin on Cousin or Fregate. With just 40 or so left in the wild, this is now one of the world's rarest birds.

It is only recently that The Gambia's potential for bird-watching has been fully recognised. The Abuko Forest,

only eight miles from the capital of Banjul, combines the ingredients of tropical forest, lily-covered pools and savannah grassland. Among the most attractive birds here are the kingfishers including giant, pygmy and pied.

Nearly one million Britons travel to Florida every year although relatively few will be looking for birds. Yet just next to the Cape Kennedy space centre is the extensive Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, where many hundreds of herons and egrets nest. This is also a staging post for migrant wading birds that on their journeys to and from South America.

To escape completely from the depths of winter and also experience the holiday of a lifetime, the best choice

must be Australia. The state of Queensland, in particular, offers a remarkable range of habitats with tropical forests and coral reefs meeting at the coastline near Cairns. Among the most elusive forest birds is the southern cassowary — an ostrich-like species with a reputation for ferocious attacks on humans who get too close.

A three-week trip to Australia can yield a list of nearly 400 species. One highlight is a visit to the Great Barrier Reef, and specifically to the tiny coral sand spit called Michmas Cay. Here you will land in the middle of a massive colony of sea birds, including common noddies.

Closer to home are two excellent lakes that lie about 80 miles east of

Paris. The Lac Der du Chantecoq and Lac de la Forêt d'Orient were built to take excess water from the rivers Marne and Seine so flooding in Paris could be prevented. Now they are the winter home for several white-tailed sea eagles and up to 300 common cranes. This is a popular choice for weekend breaks by car. But be warned: it can be cold, and visitors should take thermal clothing.

KEITH BETTON

■ Specialist bird-watching holiday companies include Naturwerk (01962 733051); Birdquest (01254 826377); Wildwings (01779 884 8040); Sunbird (01767 662969); Limosa (01263 578143); Ornithology (01243 864513).

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At the Great Wall we opt for a picnic at Jinshanling, miles from the crowds and the vendors. In Guilin, we head for the Yaoshan Mountain for the most magnificent views over the undulating hills around Guilin. All these are in addition to the usual highlights of the Middle Kingdom - Xian's Terracotta Army, the waterfront of Shanghai, the gardens and canals of Suzhou and the magical cruise through the spectacular Li River of Guilin. At CTS Horizons, China is more than just another destination.

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Star trekkers' rewarding mission



**Mike Gerrard
braves the wrath
of a pride of lions
on an African
adventure - all for
a worthy cause**

Exhilaration was how Rita Hamilton-Burgin felt. A different word might have been expected from someone who had just walked 120 miles in six days in temperatures of up to 120 degrees, especially as she had never before done anything more energetic than walking her dogs in West Sussex. But she was emphatic: "You feel you've got Africa coming up through the soles of your feet."

Rita and her husband Stephen, a cabinet-maker, had joined myself and 23 others for a sponsored walk in the Great Rift Valley in Tanzania, while 18 more were nearby doing a sponsored climb to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Together, the two groups raised £40,000 for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and that is a small proportion of the hundreds of thousands of pounds being raised these days for charities through sponsored hikes and bike rides.

From Ireland to China, today's holiday trend is to combine a good time with a good cause.

It was a tough time, too, as those on Trek Tanzania discovered. It was unseasonably hot in September and even the Masai who accompanied the walk were complaining about the heat.

The route took us through lion territory, and no one was allowed to stray from their walking group and its two Masai guides. To reinforce the warning, a lion was heard roaring outside our first night's camp in the bush. A tent has never felt so flimsy, but the guards chased it away. At one time a Masai man had to kill a lion with his bare hands before he could become a warrior, a feat achieved by a group of them surrounding a lion at night, chanting and dancing as they closed in on the animal, until the would-be warrior plunged in for the kill.

It is one of the few Masai traditions to have died out, as our guides on the walk, or round the campfire at night. Our occasional pains - blisters, scratches from the fear-



The two groups that took part in Trek Tanzania, accompanied by Masai guides, raised £40,000 for the NSPCC. Donations are also made to local eye clinics, where sight-saving operations are carried out

some thorn trees, a few tummy upsets - were dwarfed by this and other delights walking by a family of giraffe, past herds of zebra, visiting a Masai village in part of the Rift Valley seldom seen by trekkers, watching the sun rise in the morning, walking 20 miles and then watching it set again over Ol Donyo Lengai, the Masai Mountain of God, an active volcano that rises 9,500ft towards the heavens.

By the time we passed beneath Lengai's ash-dark slopes, the end of our trek was in sight. That last day had been the toughest of all. We rose with the sun, foot-slogged for hours over a desert-like scrub where shade was something we could only dream about, then our footsteps echoed over Lengai's hardened lava, where the white bones of cattle lay scorched by the sun.

Finally we reached the shade of an acacia tree and rested, exhausted, before hauling ourselves over the last small ridge to the camp, and



While crossing Tanzania on foot is exhausting, it also has its rewards, such as a giraffe sighting (left); trekkers take a break near the Mountain of God (right)



the promise of the cold river running beside it.

It was the hardest walk of my life, and the most rewarding week I have ever spent. I looked at my £90 walking boots, and the cut-up bits of

old car tyre some of our Masai guides were wearing.

I thought of the village school we visited, where there was no chalk for the blackboard, and of the eye clinic, where we handed over a

cheque for \$5,000 (about £3,000): the NSPCC supports a local Masai project each year from the money raised.

Our \$5,000 would pay for more than 800 cataract operations, restoring the sight of

blind Masai. We may not have much ourselves, but compared with the people who live in places like rural Tanzania, to borrow a phrase from Paul Simon's song, we really have got diamonds on the soles of

our shoes. And by pounding the earth or pumping the pedals with them in a good cause, we can at least hope to make a bit of difference.

● The NSPCC's Trek Tanzania will be repeated next year from September 25 to October 8. The cost will be £1,975, and you will be asked to raise an additional sum for the NSPCC.

Further information from Megan Munrell (071-825 2605).

Diana dresses go on display to raise funds

"SHE was a wonderful woman", said Maureen Rorech, whose collection of 14 dresses once owned by Diana, Princess of Wales, went on display at the Tampa Museum of Art in Florida this week, writes Tom Chesshyre.

Ms Rorech decided to exhibit the dresses, which she bought at a Christie's charity auction in June in London, to help raise funds for charities including AIDS, cancer and children's groups, and the Red Cross.

Among the dresses on display are: a blue silk dinner dress that the Princess wore when she danced with John Travolta at the White House; a burgundy velvet dinner dress which she wore to the preview of *Back to the Future* in 1985; and a classic white dinner dress by Catherine Walker first worn when Diana met the King and Queen of Malaysia in 1993.

The dresses cost Ms Rorech, from Long Island in New York, \$870,000. "I was greatly saddened when Diana died," she said. "And I decided to use my collection to follow in her footsteps to raise money for deserving causes."

The display stays in Tampa until December 7 before moving to a museum in Athens in Georgia, and then Washington DC, early next year. It is scheduled to reach London in June 2000. More than 3,500 tickets at \$11.50 (about £7) each have been sold in advance. Media attention has been lavish and on opening day the display room was packed.

Internet site: www.princessdresses.com

Tampa Museum of Art: 001 813 274 8130



The Princess in blue silk

CHARITY BEGINS ON HOLIDAY



JOINING a charity holiday generally involves paying a registration fee of £200-£300. You also commit yourself to raising a certain

amount in donations and sponsorship, usually £2,000-£3,000. The registration and sponsorship pays for all the costs of the trip, except for personal spending money. The remainder goes to the charity. Oxfam, for instance, raised £80,000 from one such holiday last spring, while Guide Dogs for the Blind benefited by £100,000 when 95 people joined their summer bike ride in Russia. Some of the charity treks and bike rides planned for 1998 include:

JAN 30-FEB 8
HELPS (01273 453511), Health Education Literacy Population Services: it supports and educates women and children in southern India. Charity walk in India covers 86 miles from Bangalore to Mysore. Registration £200, sponsorship £2,000.

FEB 7-14
National Deaf Children's Society (0171-490 8650). Bike ride through Jordan from Amman to Aqaba. Registration £200, sponsorship £2,000.

FEB 21-MARCH 1
The Children's Society (0171-278 5769). Egyptian Experience bike ride. Registration £250, sponsorship £1,975.

MARCH 7-15 and OCT 17-25
Norwood Ravenswood (0181-954 4555), charity for socially disadvantaged children. Kenya Experience cycling safari. Registration £400, sponsorship £2,000.

MARCH 14-22
NCH Action for Children (0171-704 7019). The Big Bike Ride, from the Pyramids to the Red Sea. Registration £220, sponsorship £2,000.

MARCH 21-28
ASPIRE (0181-954 0701), the Association for Spinal Injury Research Rehabilitation and Reintegration. Trek from the Red Sea to the top of Mount Sinai. Registration: £195, sponsorship £2,000.

MARCH 28-APRIL 5
British Heart Foundation (0500 200 575). Jordan Desert Hike. Registration £250, sponsorship £2,150.

APRIL 25-MAY 3
Norwood Ravenswood (0282 954 4555). Bike ride from Mount Sinai to Jerusalem. Registration £400, sponsorship £2,000. Repeated in Oct.

MAY 30-JUNE 6
British Heart Foundation (0500 200 575). Iceland Bike Ride. Registration £250, sponsorship £2,150.

MAY 31-JUNE 8
Scope (0500 575222). The Great Wall of China 60-mile hike. Registration £195, sponsorship £2,000.

JUNE 13-21
Guide Dogs for the Blind (01539 735080). Crossing the Atlas Mountains. Deposit £220, sponsorship £2,000.

JULY 3-12
Friends of Russian Children (0171-404 7766). Helsinki to St Petersburg Bike Ride. £200 registration, £2,000 sponsorship - or £3,500 if you sign up for the following ride.

JULY 15-26
Friends of Russian Children (0171-404 7766). St Petersburg to Moscow Bike

Ride, about 450 miles. £200 registration, £2,000 sponsorship.

JULY 31-AUGUST 9
Scope (0500 575222). The Russian Bike Away, from St Petersburg to Moscow. Registration £195, sponsorship £2,000.

SEPT 5-13
British Heart Foundation (0500 200575). Greece bike ride from Mount Olympus to Delphi, about 225 miles. Registration £250, sponsorship £2,150.

OCTOBER
Leonard Cheshire (0141-332 1811). African Tracks, 250-mile bike ride across Uganda to raise money for disabled people. Registration £200, sponsorship £2,300.

OCT 17-25
apa (0171-251 5860), which works to reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol. The Three Seas Cycle Challenge visits the Mediterranean, Dead Sea and Sea of Galilee. Registration £250, sponsorship £2,500.

OCT 24-NOV 1
World ORT Union (0171-446 8500), a Jewish educational charity. Navigating the Bible bike ride, about 200 miles from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea, or a hike on the same Exodus route. Registration £300, sponsorship £2,200.

OCT 31-NOV 8
Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society (contact Dorothy MacKenzie, 0131-313 3828). The 7th Nazareth Hospital Bike Ride, about 220 miles through Galilee. Registration £150, sponsorship £2,000.

NOV 10-17
Guide Dogs for the Blind (01539 735080). Cycle across Cuba. Registration £230, sponsorship £2,000.

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AROUND THE WORLD A WEEKEND GUIDE

JILL CRAWSHAW'S TRAVEL TIPS

It's a cottage called gite

WITH France back in favour among British holidaymakers, Brittany Ferries' 0990 360360, which took over the Gites de France UK marketing last year, has frozen its prices for 1998 and added gites in several regions.

Some of these are in the wine-growing areas of Burgundy, the Loire and Bordeaux, where owners will advise holidaymakers on the best vineyards to visit, what to taste and what to buy.

A typical gite on a farm near Bergerac in Aquitaine costs from £55.30 for each of four holidaymakers for a week, and from £98.10 for two weeks. These prices include the ferry crossings.

If you are travelling to one of the more distant gites and staying there for a week or more, Brittany Ferries will offer one night's free family accommodation in a hotel en route on either the outward or return journey (but not if you use the short sea crossings).

Early bargains

IF YOU can get away in early December or during the second and third weeks of January, you will be able to take advantage of some of the best sunshine and sightseeing bargains of the year.

You can gasp at the Taj Mahal, flying directly to Agra

for a week (room only). This will cost £439 in early December or £429 from January 5-11. Or unlock the mysteries of the Forbidden City on a six-night stay in Beijing. This will cost £399 in early December.

A Mexican holiday with three nights exploring Mayan ruins and three nights in high-rise Cancun costs £540 (room only) in mid-December and early January, when temperatures are far more pleasant than in steamy summer. These tours are all available through Kuoni Limited Editions (01306 740500).

Ski trains

EUROSTAR "Ski Saver" trains (0545 303030) leave London's Waterloo Station on Saturdays at 08.57 and Ashford at 10.06, and arrive at Modbury at 17.41 and Bourne St-Maurice at 18.27 on the same day. The service begins on December 13 and runs until April 25. Return fares cost from £149-£199 and there is no charge for skis.

For those who can face the journey of 15 hours or more, Eurotunes coach services (0990 143219) are the cheapest way to travel to the Alpine resorts. Coaches leave Lon-

don's Victoria Coach Station on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays at 18.30, arriving at Grenoble the next morning at 10.15. Chambéry at 11.15 and Annecy at 12.30. The adult return fare is £97, and a further £2 will take you as far as Chamonix. There is a £4 fee for carrying skis on board and this service runs until March 31.

SINCE The Gambia's Banjul airport reopened last month after a million-dollar renovation, regular travellers, says The Gambia Experience (01705 730888), are already nostalgic for the old laid-back terminal, where porters took your luggage by hand and you could pass inevitable delays outside the airport by sunbathing and eating ice-cream. The firm offers twice-weekly departures costing from £199 return, flight only, and from £289-£394 for a week's B&B stay in a two-star beach hotel, making the tiny 30-200 mile country the cheapest guaranteed sizzling winter sunshine destination in the holiday brochures. Not everything has changed, however - yours is still likely to be the only aircraft on the runway and yes, it will probably also be late.

Flexible cities

A NEW programme of city and country breaks, Brief Encounters, has been

launched by Simply Travel (0181-995 9323), the group that specialises in lesser-known Mediterranean resorts.

Offering only historical, luxury or smaller family-run hotels, and with flexible travel arrangements, Brief Encounters' 18 cities include Verona, Seville and Istanbul, as well as Paris, Salzburg and Amsterdam. A three-night B&B break to Istanbul staying in the small Celal Sultan Hotel, a converted traditional Ottoman house, costs between £360 and £440.

"Wandering" breaks to Andalusia, Majorca and Ireland are a variation on the city theme. In Majorca, a four-night break with two nights' B&B in its capital Palma, staying at the two-star Hotel Born, a converted 16th-century palace, and another two nights in the tiny four-star Hotel Cala Sant Vicenç near Pollensa costs £404. This price also includes the flights and car hire for three days. These prices are valid through to April 3.

A TWICE-WEEKLY service to the Armenian capital of Yerevan by British Mediterranean Airways (01784 26630) is due to start on December 1. The five-hour flight, via Tbilisi in Georgia, will cost from £800 return. Yerevan's attractions include the ancient manuscripts in the Matenadaran museum, the National Gallery, the weekend markets, the views of Mount Ararat in neighbouring Turkey, and what many (including, reputedly, Winston Churchill) believe to be the world's best brandy. Simply Travel (0181-568 4499), the only UK tour operator to Armenia, offers a week-long B&B stay in Yerevan for £696-£726 including flights, with pre-bookable extensions into the countryside.

Off to Orissa

WITH its large, empty stretches of coastline, Orissa has been tipped as India's next Goa or Kerala - but the little-known eastern state has much more to offer than



Fish sellers on the Bosphorus in Istanbul, where you can stay in an old Ottoman house converted into a hotel

sandy beaches. Adventure specialist Explore Worldwide (01252 34416) is introducing Wildlife and Tribes of Orissa Tours in March 1998 and between November 1998 and January 1999 (to avoid the monsoon season).

Starting in Calcutta, the 17-day tour includes Simlipal National Park, a sanctuary for the rare Bengal tiger, and Ekakula Beach, where thousands of giant Pacific Ridley sea turtles lay their eggs. Also on the itinerary: the vast Sun Temple of Konarak, the Jagannath Temple at Puri, one of India's holiest sites, and Bhubaneswar with about 500 temples, plus visits to remote

tribal hill villages. These tours cost between £1,175 and £1,330 for flights, internal travel and accommodation, mainly in B&Bs.

UP TO 13,000 cheaper holidays for single-parent families are on offer from Thomson Holidays (0990 502555) next summer. Traditionally, holiday firms offer free places or discounts only when children are accompanied by two adults. Thomson has selected 16 apartments in 14 resorts in popular family destinations such as Majorca, the Algarve and Cortu, where reductions will

still apply for up to two children even if there is only one adult. Although the prices still include the "under-occupancy" supplement (travel-speak for extra charges that usually cancel out any children's reductions), Thomson claims that savings are greater than on any other comparable holiday. A week in May in Majorca, for example, would cost £229 for a parent with two children. Instead of the normal brochure price of £495. In August the single-parent offer price would be £693 instead of £1,197.

The non-profit-making organisation One Parent Family Holidays (01465 821288 on Mondays, 01776 889500 Tuesdays-Saturdays), which was formed in 1975, claims to offer 50 per cent discounts for children to most destinations within Europe, and 40 per cent in the United States. The offers for next year include group camping trips in the Loire valley and holidays in the Balearic Islands, Holland, Florida and Australia. A parent, and child under 10, pay £249 for the French camping trip in June, rising to £299 in peak season.



Guarding the Forbidden City: a fierce bronze lion in the Imperial Palace, Beijing

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TRAVEL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

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FRANCE - ITALY - FRANCE - ITALY - FRANCE - ITALY

0171 287 8997

AFRICA

CAPE TOWN holiday across the Cape, the 2000, 2100, 2200, 2300, 2400, 2500, 2600, 2700, 2800, 2900, 3000, 3100, 3200, 3300, 3400, 3500, 3600, 3700, 3800, 3900, 4000, 4100, 4200, 4300, 4400, 4500, 4600, 4700, 4800, 4900, 5000, 5100, 5200, 5300, 5400, 5500, 5600, 5700, 5800, 5900, 6000, 6100, 6200, 6300, 6400, 6500, 6600, 6700, 6800, 6900, 7000, 7100, 7200, 7300, 7400, 7500, 7600, 7700, 7800, 7900, 8000, 8100, 8200, 8300, 8400, 8500, 8600, 8700, 8800, 8900, 9000, 9100, 9200, 9300, 9400, 9500, 9600, 9700, 9800, 9900, 10000, 10100, 10200, 10300, 10400, 10500, 10600, 10700, 10800, 10900, 11000, 11100, 11200, 11300, 11400, 11500, 11600, 11700, 11800, 11900, 12000, 12100, 12200, 12300, 12400, 12500, 12600, 12700, 12800, 12900, 13000, 13100, 13200, 13300, 13400, 13500, 13600, 13700, 13800, 13900, 14000, 14100, 14200, 14300, 14400, 14500, 14600, 14700, 14800, 14900, 15000, 15100, 15200, 15300, 15400, 15500, 15600, 15700, 15800, 15900, 16000, 16100, 16200, 16300, 16400, 16500, 16600, 16700, 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Morton still outsells the rest

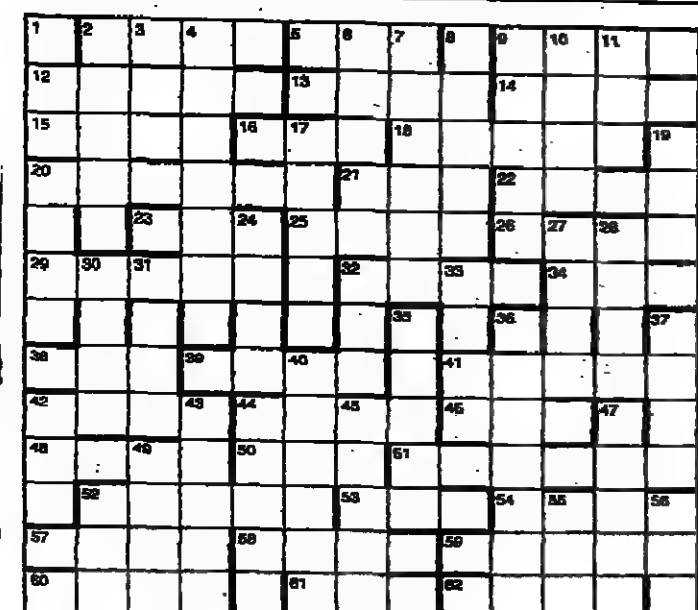
■ *Diana, Her True Story* — In her own words by Andrew Morton (Michael O'Mara, £15.99). (Controversial biography. Sales: £1,357,372)
■ *Diana, Princess of Wales* — A Tribute by Tim Graham Wendenfeld & Nicolson (£12.99). Photo-story of her life. Sales: £513,173
■ *Diana: Her True Story* by Andrew Morton (Michael O'Mara, £19.99). The original exposure. Sales: £152,551



■ *Diana: A Tribute to the Princess of Wales* by Tim Graham Wendenfeld & Nicolson (Michael O'Mara, £12.99). Sales: £513,173
■ *Diana: Her True Story* by Andrew Morton (Michael O'Mara, £19.99). Sales: £152,551



THE LISTENER CROSSWORD No 3437: The Message by MynoT



To get this unsigned message across, it has been concealed in the letters (in order but not necessarily consecutive) omitted from answers before entry in the grid. Solvers are asked to enter the (missing) final to the message beneath the grid. All answers and entries are words found in Chambers 1993 except for one well-known place name. The numbers in brackets indicate the length of the grid entries.

ACROSS

- 2 Feather's soft and light, mostly (4)
- 5 Figs for sweet pie (3)
- 9 Blockhead for the chop (4)
- 12 Cautious swoop around English bogs (5)
- 13 Spring dead one on church (4)
- 14 One who approves our loud rave is crazy (4)
- 15 Activists cared about society (4)
- 16 Taste of flan I devour (except some filling) (3)
- 18 Next best principle's almost symbol of death (5)
- 20 60% going from C to a... (4)
- 21 ... sweet note in pain (3)
- 22 Room for half a dozen? (4)
- 23 Colour, unmistakable but not discontinued (3)
- 25 Mix early English philtre for best velvet? (4)
- 26 Chair brought back for promenade (4)
- 29 Kick VIP? (5)
- 32 Northern feast may be abominable (4)
- 34 During the day, one in red passed through (3)
- 38 Plant house with a following (3)
- 39 Ninepence in bag for this lot of beer? (4)
- 41 Blenheim on the Queen needs a repairer (5)
- 42 Reform a must for malodorous mammals (4)
- 44 Started to ask one (4)
- 46 Spike's in room A509, without cold water (3)
- 48 Draw back with fright from spectre (4)
- 50 Jolly party I have (3)
- 51 Graduate in hat produces pastry mould (4)
- 52 Unrecorded in Henry and Alfred's times (5)
- 53 Make fun of mollusc with new tail (3)
- 54 Dirges take in the difficulties (4)
- 57 Quince consumes best lubricant (4)

- 58 Crafty people find space in tubes (4)
- 59 Bluebottle records "hit and run" (5)
- 60 Gaffer on Scottish shores makes cuts (4)
- 61 Paper boat by the sound of it (3)
- 62 With much deliberation we start to insulate broken light at the end of day (4)

DOWN

- 1 Trouble arising in room in barem (3)
- 2 Fairies almost die (5)
- 3 Shelter a general (3)
- 4 Free one's local credit (7)
- 6 Ambassador heard the last words... (5)
- 7 ... Lily heard a monster (4)
- 8 The sword gets home in skin (5)
- 9 Take chances about instruments (5)
- 10 You've a bit part, Irist (4)
- 11 Notes the heads of my essential synopsis (3)
- 17 Snake-like covering (5)
- 19 Said to have a right to the ballroom (3)
- 20 Dandies losing money in turkey- (4)
- 24 Return of a delay in the web (4)
- 27 Teacher keeps in everyone (separately) (4)
- 28 A red-shaped tomb? (4)
- 30 Waterweed not a force in Zeon's city (4)
- 31 Tidy Newcastle has a sort of square (4)
- 32 Deer found in US and Melksham (3)
- 33 Most operations include part of organ (4)
- 35 African puts embargo on Trade Union (5)
- 36 Vases mannos are breaking (7)
- 37 River leads to Ukrainian & Russian agricultural land? No & yes (4)
- 40 Shopping tax to monarch (6)
- 42 A wry face, whichever way up (3)
- 43 Old seat to make acceptable to European (5)
- 44 They summer holidays to be heard (5)
- 45 Confused on board? (two words, 5)
- 47 Plainly without cash to a marked extent (5)
- 49 One in a hundred thousand is not an expert (4)
- 52 Stop in middle of lots of fish (3)
- 55 Hooster manufactured in Cowley? (3)
- 56 Yes, mutation produces local strain (5)

LISTENER CROSSWORD No 3437
in association with Waterstone's

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No 3437, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, by Thursday, December 4.

WATERSTONE'S

The winner will receive a Waterstone's book token worth £75. Five runners-up will each receive a book token worth £10

Waterstone's first opened a bookshop in 1982, and now has a branch in virtually every major town and city in the UK and Ireland. Each of its 100-odd branches has at least 50,000 titles in stock and can order any book currently in print in the UK. Out-of-Print Booksearch, 01892 522700. Mailing Service and Signed First Editions, 01225 448596. For your nearest branch of Waterstone's, call 0181-742 3800.

Solution and notes for 3434:
The Albigensian Murder by Chetron

13 unlucky ships or aeroplanes have blundered into the BERMUDA TRIANGLE (anagram of title) and become lost. (SAIC, JET, TERN, DOW, WING, BRIG, PACKET, MAN, SHIP, HOPPER, ARK, KETCH, PROA)

Solvers were also required to shade the defining land masses (as per Chambers) FLORIDA, THE BAHAMAS and CUBA

The winner is John Robert-Jones of Liverpool, Merseyside. The runners up are D. Greenwood, of Ealing, London; Harold Margolis, of Hackney, London; Mr and Mrs M. Winstanley, of Chelmsford, Essex; P.L. MacDougal, of Fulham, London; Hazel Workman, of Birmingham, West Midlands.

BRIDGE by Robert Sheehan

BRIDGE computer programs come in three categories: those that bid and play randomly-dealt hands, those that use prepared hands for teaching purposes, and those that enable you to play bridge against other players on the Internet. All require an IBM-compatible personal computer, the more powerful the better. The minimum requirements are usually 4Mb RAM and Windows 3.1. Before buying, check with the vendor that you have the right kit.

The three leading programs in the playing category are listed below. In each case the bidding is much better than the card play, where there are frequent errors. They are easy to use, play Acol as well as American systems, offer popular conventions and have a range of features.

Q-plus Bridge: This German program, second in the 1997 American Computer Bridge Tournament, has the most extensive range of systems, including Acol, Precision, and most of the American ones. The help during the bidding is particularly good. Here is an accurate auction from Q-plus:

Dealer West		Love all	
♠ K8	♥ A2	♠ K10863	♥ A3
♥ A42	♦ 109	♦ 1083	♣ 1083
♠ AKQ95	♣ 1083		
West	East	South	North
1C	1H	1S	1S
4C	4H	4S	4S
5H	5H	5H	5H
*Club-bid			

Q-plus assures us that Four Clubs is a cue-bid in the above auction, something I would have thought open to question. Still, it did well to detect the diamond weakness. £49.50, Mr Bridge 01483 48996. Bridge Baron 8 (and Bridge

Baron: From the US, the winner of the Computer Bridge Tournament. It is suited to players of all skill levels. It will provide hints on bidding or play — like many human players it is often wrong but never in doubt. A smaller version, Bridge Baron 8, is good value. Bridge Baron 8: £49.95, Bridge Plus 0118-935 1052. (DOS and Mac versions also available.) Bridge Baron: £20, computer stores (needs a CD-ROM drive).

Micro Bridge 8: A lively product from Japan. Among its many features is one which allows you to play match-pointed pairs using the results of tournaments already played in Japan. The display of the cards on the screen is not as good as the other two programs. The hand below illustrates a couple of interesting technical points missed.

♠ A9432	♥ J5
♥ A2	♠ 985
♦ K2	♥ AQJ4
♠ A1052	♦ Q843

Contract 3NT by West
Lands: three of hearts

With the computer playing all four hands, the lead went to the king and West ducked. Although unlikely to cost, this is a mistake because South may switch to a spade. West would have to play the ace on this as otherwise the defence could switch back to hearts threatening to set up five winners. Now, when West plays clubs (ace and low to the queen is best), he will go down if one of the defenders started with K Q 10 x of spades. When I recalc the defenders' spades to produce the critical layout, the program did not find the spade switch: £54, Bridge Plus (needs a CD-ROM drive).
Next week: the teaching and Internet programs.

WORD ANSWERS

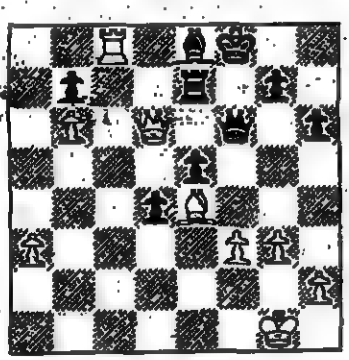
Answers from page 36

ANLAGE
(b) The rudimentary basis of an organ or organism.
FRIKKADEL
(a) A South African ball of meat, fried or baked; a rissole.
DOSSY
(a) Stylish, smart. Cf. the Scottish doss neat, spruce, and dossie a small, neat, well-dressed person.
GAZOB
(c) Oz slang for a fool or blunderer.

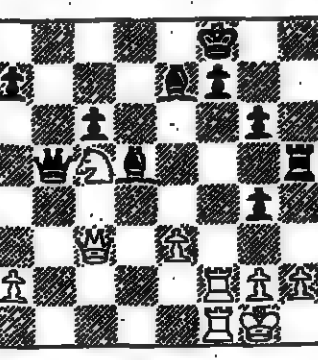
CHESS by Raymond Keene

I CONTINUE with some of the more ingenious suggestions submitted by Times readers. Today we have one brilliant move, one clarification and one horrendous blunder.

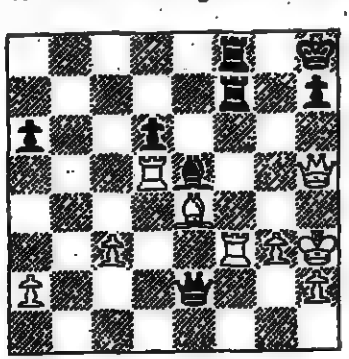
The first position was originally published as a Winning Move on October 10.



Solution:
1 Rxe8! Kxe8 2 Bg6+ Kf8 3 Qd8-mating.
D. Povey of Littlehampton and David Barnett of Surrey point out that Black had an alternative defensive try with 1 Rxe8+ Kxe8 2 Bg6+ and now 2... Rf7. However, they also point out the refutation: 3 Qd8+ Ke7 4 Qxb7+ and White will exchange everything off on f7 and then queen the b-pawn.



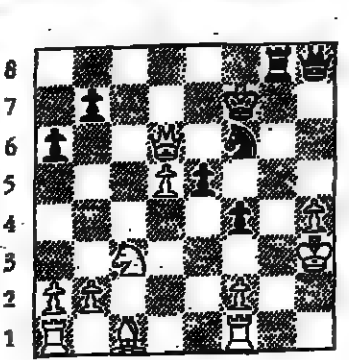
Solution:
1 Rd7+! Bxd7 2 Ne6+ Ke8 (2... Kf8 3 Qg7 mate) 3 Nc7+ and the black queen is lost.
Dr Harrison of East Sussex indicates an alternative method for White: 1 Rb2! Now if Black captures the knight with 1... Qxe5 2 Rb5+ forces 2... Rd8 3 Qd8+ Ke7 4 Qf6 checkmate. The best that Black can do is 1... Qxb2 2 Nd7+ Ke8 3 Qxb2 Kxd7 4 Qb7+ but White will win easily. Well spotted.



Solution:
1 Rxe2 does 2 Qxe5+ Kg8 3 Rf4! and Black has no way to counter 4 Rg4+, except by 3... Rxf4 when 4 Bd5+ which wins outright.
Professor Eilon of London suggests 1 Rd7 would be a swifter way for White to win. However, after 1 Rd7, Black responds 1... Qd5+, capturing the white queen and utterly turning the tables. Backwards moves are often difficult to spot.

WINNING MOVES

By Raymond Keene
Chess Correspondent
Black to play. This position is from the game O'Kelly-Speelman, Cambridge v Middlesex 1971. Despite his large material deficit of rook and bishop, Black has a fierce attack along the open g- and h-files. How can he now bring this attack to a successful conclusion?



The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last week's competition: 1 Rf1.

CYBERSPACE Thirty-Eight offers readers the chance to turn virtual reality into an adrenalin-firing activity. Top prizes in our latest competition are two pairs of silver vouchers for on-track experience at the Brands Hatch race circuit. Codemasters released its main winter title yesterday, TOCA Touring Car Championship. This is the official game of the 1997 AutoTrader RAC Touring Car Championship and the PC and PlayStation title is authentic down to the cars, teams, drivers and tracks from the real event.



Script an ad and win a day's hands-on racing at Brand's Hatch

The choice of cars covers a souped-up Peugeot 406 to a Nissan Primera, all put through their paces on accurate virtual models of seven challenging courses, including Donington Park, Silverstone and Brands Hatch. There are plenty of dynamic camera views, such as a "head cam" vista from inside the driver's helmet which judders with the car's G-forces for added realism.

As good as the game is, nothing beats the real thing. So two readers, and a guest each, will scoop the chance to feel such G-forces for real. The silver package promises a day to remember with the Nigel Mansell Racing School at Brands

Hatch. The trip starts with a classroom briefing, then moves to the racetrack where you drive a BMW 318 and a racing car. The visit will last around two and a half hours; at the end you will be presented with a commemorative certificate proving you have tested your mettle in metal at the world-famous track. Cyberspace Thirty-

Eight, Computer Games and Pastimes, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

You may also e-mail entries, marked Cyberspace Thirty-Eight, to cyber@dircon.co.uk by December 3.

Normal Times competition rules apply and the judges will not enter into additional correspondence. The two winners, plus six runners-up, will also win PC copies of Codemasters' TOCA Touring Car Championship.

BIRMINGHAM Computer Manuals has just released its latest imports of Prima game cheat books. The PlayStation Pocket Power Guide (vol 2), offers insider information on over 60 games, from Assault Rigs to War Gods. Tips for Need for Speed II, for example, allow you to get some unusual mileage out of the title which you may not have known about. Type "OUTHOME" and your powerful sports car turns into an outside too on wheels, while "TREMME" turns your racer into a dinosaur with an unparalleled view of the course thanks to its long neck. The sister title is Sega Saturn Pocket Power Guide (vol 2), which

does the same thing for 30 games. In Maxx TT, swap bikes for Isle of Man sheep as follows: at the "select transmission" screen of Saturn mode, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Z, Y. Both guides cost £6.99.

Prima's Big PlayStation Book, £11.99, claims to have cheat codes for over 100 games but tends to be more of a briefing manual. So does *Nintendo 64 Unauthorised Game Secrets*, £9.99, but this is woefully inadequate. Try using it to plor some games and you are frustrated by vagaries. You can contact Computer Manuals on 0121-706 6000 or via their website (<http://www.compmann.co.uk>).

NEW SOFTWARE

I HAVE a problem with Microsoft's Age of Empires. This is a glossy god game in which you dispatch hunters to kill elephants and lions for food at the start of the game. It seems so barbaric that I tried to build my civilisation by feeding them a diet of fish alone, which could be why the workings were later wiped out.



Engrossing: Age of Empires

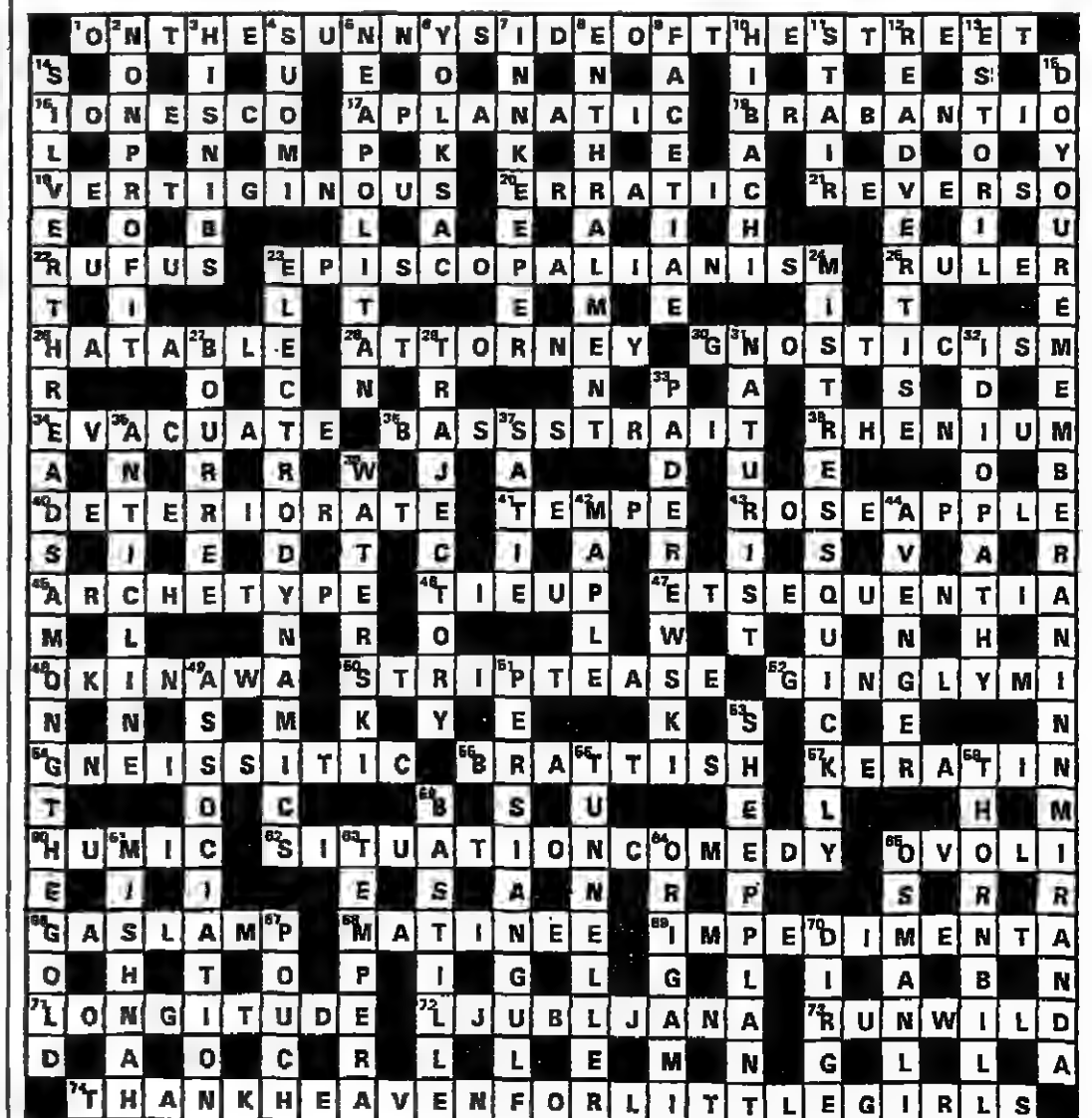
Age of Empires is Microsoft's slant on Sid Meier's classic, Civilization. Charges of blatant unoriginality can be forgiven, however, since this title was developed by Ensemble Studios under the guidance of Bruce Shelley, who co-designed Sid Meier's city Civilisation and Railroad Tycoon.

Instead of the dog, boot and warship you opt for eight characters from the film — Darth Vader, Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia among them. The only familiar squares from the board are Go, prison, free parking and go to prison. Everything else takes an unimagineable: a Skoda sports car. Your treatment should cover no more than one side of A4 paper. Send your entries, with your name, age and telephone number.

The game looks sensational and runs like clockwork. It easily becomes all-consuming yet it can be difficult to shake off feelings of already having been there and done that. Still, it is extremely polished as you expect from one of the titles warranting most attention when Microsoft first aired it at Atlanta's trade show this summer. ● Verdict: 9 out of 10. Classy and engrossing god gaming. £39.99.

HASBRO Interactive's Monopoly Star Wars is a marriage made in the heavens but executed in a muddled hell. Despite input by the original voice for C-3PO in the film trilogy, Anthony Daniels, the title has little to excite Monopoly fans and even less for all but die-hard Star Wars groupies.

SOLUTION JUMBO CROSSWORD 135



The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, is Don Cox, of Wirral, Cheshire

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

Q My brother has just got divorced from his wife who were very fond of and would still like to see. What is the correct etiquette in this situation? — Celia Glynn, Sherborne, Dorset.

A No. First tell your brother (preferably in writing) that you would like to continue seeing his former wife. This is a question of courtesy rather than consent, as a divorced spouse has no say in the matter. Next write to her, saying that despite the divorce you wish to remain friends. I suspect she will be delighted with this gesture.

Q What is the correct form of address to a married couple where the wife, but not the husband, is an ordained minister? We have been variously addressed as 'Rev'd & Mr G', 'Mr & Rev'd E', 'Mr & Rev'd Mrs G', 'Rev'd Mrs E & Mr G' and a variety of other permutations. — George Hubbard, Willingham, Cambridge.

A Quite simply: Mr George and The Rev'd Elizabeth Hubbard.

Q Early one morning this summer, I woke to the sound of rain. I suddenly remembered that the down pipe from the roof guttering was disconnected from the rainwater butt, and I rushed outside. I had to stand on tiptoe with arms outstretched to connect the down pipe, and was thus spreadeagled facing the side of the house when I heard milk bottles clinking by the door: the milkman on his delivery round in the half-light of dawn. On hot nights, as this had been, I don't wear any night clothes, and had failed to get dressed in my rush to collect the rainwater. In my nakedness, I failed to greet the milkman with my customary, cheerful "Good morning". Instead, I froze, hoping he wouldn't notice me. I wonder if I have offended him — or if I would have by acting in a more extrovert and up-front manner. — Andrew Brownridge, Askham, Notts.

A Just as the well-trained butler always feigns complete indifference should he catch his master, mistress or others in *flagrant delicto*, on the loo, or stark naked, the form of somebody in your situation is to behave as if fully clothed. You should have merely turned your head to the milkman (perhaps not the rest of your body to spare him a full-frontal assault so early in the morning) and said a bright "Good morning". I suspect he would have regarded such a reaction as less unusual than the response you describe.

Q I was always taught that when eating dessert, one should either use a spoon and

fork, or a fork alone. I have noticed of late many people using just a spoon. Is this acceptable these days? — Bruce Morgan, Duffield, Derbyshire.

A No.

Q At a recent wedding, just before the church service a visit to a pub was proposed by the groom's father. The only person I knew among the guests was the groom's father himself. Was it selfish of me not to offer the first round of drinks? — E.E. Manning, London, W8.

A The wedding day belongs to the bride, groom and their parents. Thus it was the groom's father's prerogative to stand the first round of drinks. After all, I suspect his expenses for the day were considerably less than those of his opposite number.

Q Having been divorced for 17 years, my former husband died earlier this year. Some friends say I should tick widow, some say divorced and some single on forms. I've always been addressed as Mrs. Esther McKell, Ayr, Scotland.

A The act of divorce dissolves a marriage and therefore any subsequent claims to widowhood are invalid. Thus, both for practical reasons such as pension entitlements and for social correctness, you should always tick "divorced" when filling in forms.

Q As a qualified hairdresser and beautician, I often give my friends luxurious treatments at home, the price being a good bottle of wine. This mostly works well except for one or two friends who conveniently "forget" the payment and several weeks can go by before they remember. I find this extremely rude. After all, they could not forget to pay if they went to a clinic or salon. How could I tactfully suggest that this is not acceptable and spoils what is usually a fun night? — Miss S. Myers, Worcester.

A Next time one of the miscreants comes around, say innocently: "Could I could ask your opinion about a little dilemma? As you know, the price for friends for one of my treatments is a good bottle of wine. Someone has asked me to do some extensive electrolysis, which I estimate will take 12 sessions. Do you think I could ask her to give me a case of wine? This would mean that she could settle up in advance and not worry about forgetting to pay for individual treatments." Your client should be round to the off-licence before you can say cabernet sauvignon.

John Morgan is associate editor of GQ magazine

DAN BLAIR
PILOT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

ANLAGE
a. An overflow canal
b. A rudiment
c. To overland a boat

FRIKKADEL
a. A rissole
b. A gypsy fiddle
c. The African culture owl

DOSSY
a. Smart
b. Soft
c. A class of yacht

GAZOB
a. A spyhole
b. A gypsy pancake
c. A fool

Answers on page 35

TWO BRAINS

This column welcomes feedback from readers. Abigail Rosenthal (Herts) and Norman Shepherd (Bristol) have written in suggesting that a truly creative mind might find alternative answers to the questions I have set. If you do have a valid alternative any week, please write to me, Raymond Keene, Two Brains, c/o The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The best contributions will be published in this column.

Question 1: What is the next number in this sequence?
3 4 6 12 36

Question 2: In two statements below can be read as two professions. What are they?
a) GO NURSE
b) MOON STARTER

Answers on page 35

R.K.

CROSSWORDS

By Mike Laws

The lure of empty Jumbo grids may not be quite universally acknowledged, but I have had an encouraging comment from Moscow, and am apparently an accessory (before the fact) to neglected housework in Ipswich! Such thievery of time also afflicts those that create them, since a goodly selection of entries longer than 15 letters is a prerequisite, and fitting them in means each diagram has to be constructed individually, whereas completing one of the 50 fixed grids is the daily crossword is usually the easy part. Clueing long words and phrases often presents difficulties, and a Jumbo's average solution-length exceeds that of a 15x15, so the whole puzzle can take more than four times as long to complete. The occasional obscure vocabulary becomes inevitable, given these strictures. I promise such solutions will be minimised and clued as unequivocally as possible, although still cryptically.

Christmas 1971 saw the first Times Jumbo, by Edmund Akenhead, then crossword editor. His format remains the standard, so after 125 bank holiday appearances it seemed appropriate to dub the first weekly version, on September 6, as No 126. Practical considerations militate against weekly non-cryptic versions, but these will continue to appear on Saturdays

preceding bank holidays. Style-spotters will have had the chance to identify the work of seven regular Times contributors so far, sometimes in collaboration, and puzzles by other experienced hands are already in the pipeline. Aspiring Jumboists should make contact first before committing themselves to a full grid.

The blame is entirely mine for last week's jumbo-sized errors and I apologise unreservedly; allowances will be made. Clue 35 down should have read: Refused to grant it takes two hours to get in the joint (8). However, I would still like you to say *Seat* comments, or I went mad (5,2) to: Mike Laws, Weekend Jumbo editor, c/o The Times.

PICTURE LINE



READERS are invited to suggest what the Queen Mother, pictured right, might be saying.

This picture, recently printed in *The Times*, will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, E1 9XN.

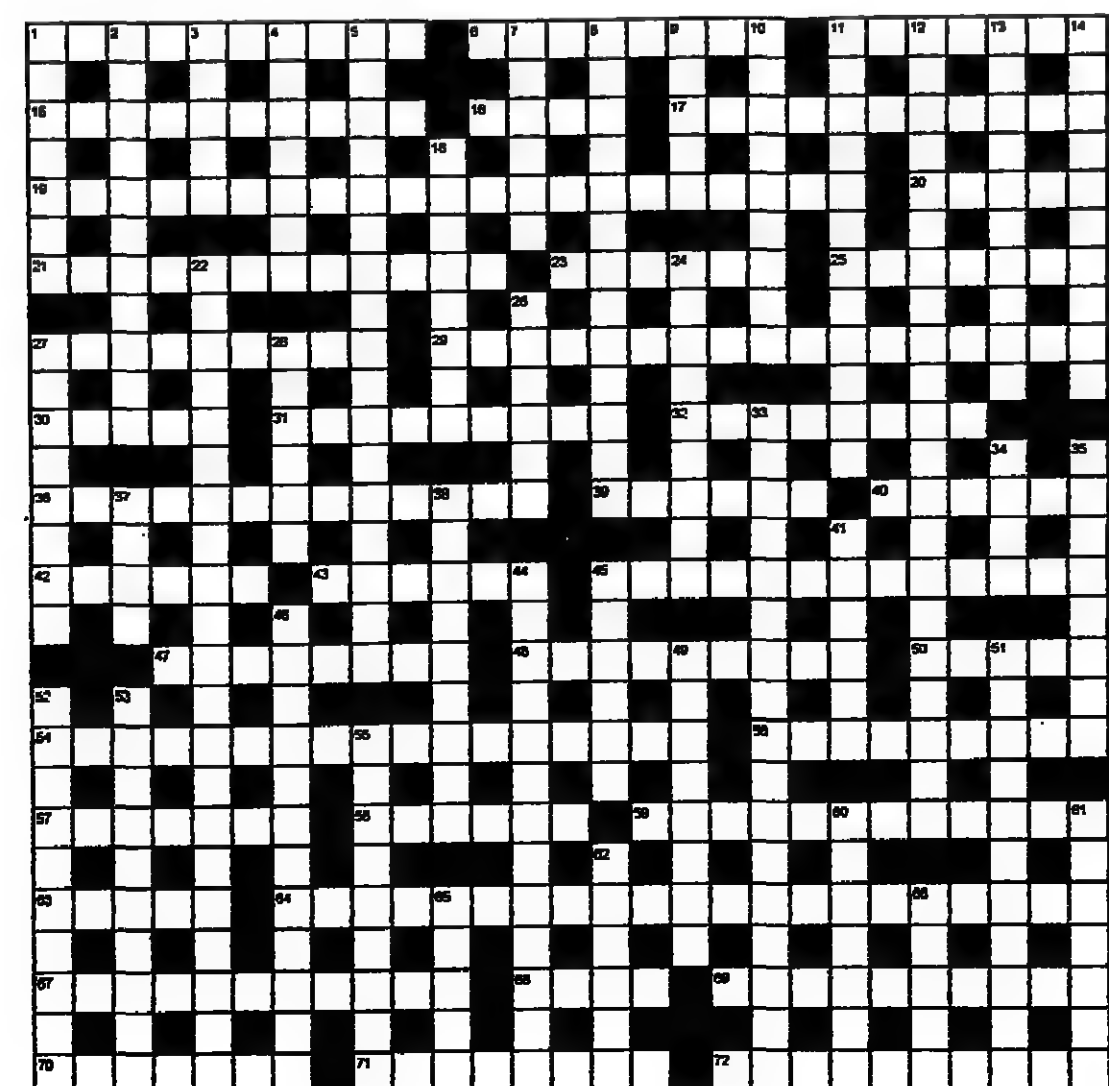
The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, November 27.

Last week's winning caption, left, was submitted by Mrs B. Graebe, of Eye, Suffolk.



JUMBO CROSSWORD 137

The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from black resin with a gold-plated clip, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 137, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Monday, December 1. The name of the winner will be published in Weekend on Saturday, December 6.

ALFRED DUNHILL
LONDON

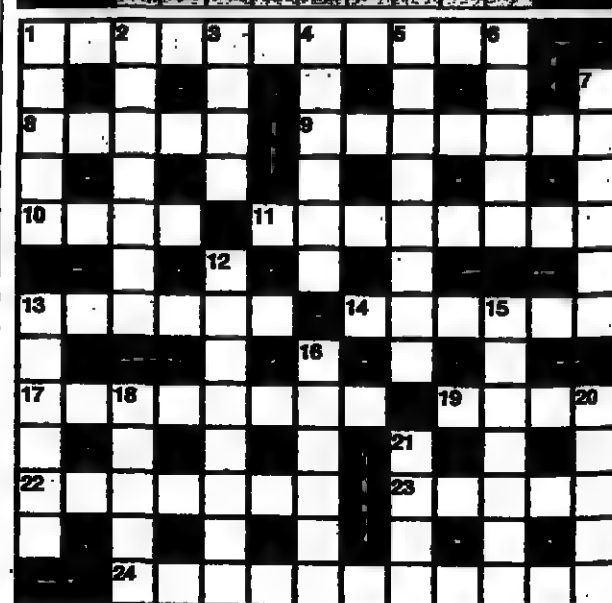
ACROSS

- 1 Fancy type of clock's mine — just a bit of froth (6-4)
- 6 Is it today? No — it was yesterday (8)
- 11 In the caves, I cleared a small cavity (7)
- 15 Set permeating in motion (10)
- 16 Booted out? (4)
- 17 Where the reception is chilly, and ideas are shelved (4,7)
- 19 Hastily concealed cigarette may be quickly disposed of (4,1,4,2,4,6)
- 20 Having all players involved in show of disapproval, it's backed (5)
- 21 Year's big lead recast, causing a quarrel? (12)
- 23 Stunt area has heroin within reach (6)
- 25 Grandson's showing great interest in cotton material (7)
- 27 Sculptor has a signed agreement rejected — say nothing (9)
- 29 Loves to fill in parts of this grid, without necessarily finishing! (7,3,7)
- 30 Somewhat wrong-headed, for a deciduous tree? (5)
- 31 Complain loudly about schooldays left — it'll be grinding (5-4)
- 32 Minor star appearing in a footnote (8)
- 36 Some money offered, being given the push (1,3)
- 39 Off-piste finally, risks may involve them (6)
- 40 Last busy with a piece of music (6)
- 42 Suzzoned with two articles to wrap (6)
- 43 Winnie, returning to US city, opens hair game (4-2)
- 45 One may control inflex, as famous merchant's left in a quandary (8,5)
- 47 Kept daily records, having acted to secure an increase (8)
- 48 Tourist reported profit, following a great deal (9)
- 50 Close with misprint — it's at bottom of column! (5)
- 54 Jane's booking perhaps means holding up the match (5,3,9)
- 56 One in test, possibly under stress (9)
- 57 It may be involving a criminal (7)
- 58 Pan nearly holds it — it's small, like 55 (9)
- 59 Inexperienced at first, feels skill growing (5,7)
- 63 Detailed cunning rodent (5)
- 64 Selected students being aware of previous literary style (6,2,13)
- 67 Extension needed, as the Shadows were performing in the evening (11)
- 68 Old Swiss hotelier starts to revamp inns, targeting Zurich (4)
- 69 Run off with single partner, doing nothing improper (10)
- 70 Start people in office, cutting bad language, at last (5,2)
- 71 One may have heard of the puzzle over the page (8)
- 72 Very vague as a result of afternoon nap, missing a boat coming in? (10)

DOWN

- 1 Gained promotion, making contact initially with certain branches (7)
- 2 Well-equipped with warnings of road hazards surrounding a capital (11)
- 3 Work on a libretto? (5)
- 4 Ignoring some characters involved, once spy defects (7)
- 5 Out of one's control, as worshipped pets may be (2,3,3,2,4)
- 7 Where sources of special prints are available (2,4)
- 8 Ben's companions are so ancient (3,2,3,5)
- 9 College head almost has the right page (5)
- 10 It's advisable to have knot securing present — that's not in doubt (4-5)
- 11 One's left to establish who the caller was (8-4)
- 12 This automatic ignition occasionally plays up (1,1,10)
- 13 Diagram sure to be messed up over editor's first drink! (10)
- 14 Detective with intelligence on the Bill — who saw it? (10)
- 18 Crack unit — part of a fleet (2-5)
- 22 Take serious risks, and discuss two elements in detail (2,7,4,3,5)
- 24 Islander with singular obsession, into Browning (9)
- 26 Curious, almost antique? (6)
- 27 Do some ironing, perhaps, to reduce the quantity (8)
- 28 Policeman found graduate in possession of grass (6)
- 33 Act with insolence, accepting the alternative is to give in meekly (4,3,5,5)
- 34 Queen's attendant dressed up in Indian costume (4)
- 35 Intense pressure — a way son got in dire straits? (4,4)
- 37 Rock music's last fund-raising activity (4)
- 38 In trouble deep in Texas — departing as is advisable? (9)
- 41 Arrives in London, perhaps — it's a crowded place (6)
- 44 A type of wit heard over dessert? It's hard to get over it (7,6)
- 45 I've abandoned eating some animal produce (6)
- 46 Outspoken scientist one dismissed as a monster (12)
- 49 Representative cross-section of the 30's (4,4)
- 51 Associate with a creed often seen as corrupt (11)
- 52 Will they clear out naval types frequenting the Derby? (5,5)
- 53 Dispute the number left (10)
- 55 One's daughter may be in the process of delivery (5,4)
- 60 A supplier of bedding material (7)
- 61 Dubious religious group split up by American pressure (7)
- 62 Cut down the weed, perhaps getting terribly chesty (6)
- 65 Answer, and say one's offered protection (5)
- 66 Second aspiration — to be smart (5)

TWO CROSSWORD



No 1258

ACROSS

- 1 Next keyboarded copies (11)
- 8 Sordid (5)
- 9 Lazarus's home town (7)
- 10 And the rest (*Lat. abbr.*) (2,2)
- 11 Rural labourer (8)
- 13 Tree, provides mace (6)
- 14 Fights with lances (6)
- 17 Cambridge mathematician once (8)
- 19 A fish, a singer (4)
- 22 Language-learner's book (7)
- 23 Sowd (bell); be consistent (5)
- 24 March girls book (*Alcor*) (6,5)

DOWN

- 1 A sense; a small sample (5)
- 2 Behave insincerely (4-3)
- 3 A bean, makes meat substitute (4)
- 4 Thin decorative strip (6)
- 5 An (alcoholic) drink (11,2) (8)
- 6 Informal expressions (5)
- 7 Greek/Turkish island (6)
- 12 A pear; a citrus, gives perfume (8)
- 13 Post-Christian 'religion' (3,3)
- 15 Sports ground (7)
- 16 Sea bird, sounds like fuel (6)
- 18 Be of use (5)
- 20 Surface lustre (5)
- 21 Barge (US) yacht (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1257

ACROSS: 1 Facade 4 Bigwig 9 Chapman 10 Fugue 11 Salve 13 Aquatic 14 Don 15 Bacon 16 Rue 17 Flatter 19 Abbot 21 Carol 22 Tangent 24 Tweeds 25 Player

DOWN: 1 Focus 2 Chaplin 3 Dam 5 Influenza 6 Wight 7 Glencoe 8 Incarcerate 12 Embattled 14 Deficit 16 Robbery 18 Agree 20 Tutor 23 Nil

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

CROSSWORD ENTHUSIASTS — SPECIAL OFFER: The Times Jumbo Crossword Book 3 is available to Times readers for just £4 (RRP £4.99) while supplies last from The Times Bookshop. Compilation volumes of The Times Two Crosswords (Book 6 — £2.99, The Times Crosswords (Volumes 10, 12, 13 — £3.99 each) and Times Computer Crosswords (Book 1 — £2.99) are also available. To order simply call 0900 134 499 for credit card orders or for further details. If paying by cheque/PO please make payable to News Books/Crosswords and send to The Times Bookshop, PO Box 345, Falmouth, TR11 2TX. Delivery in 10-14 days and subject to availability.

UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

CAPTAIN'S COURSE

Simon Barnes meets the best horseman in the world
PAGE 43

DANNY BAKER

Spurs to glory?
Not likely
PAGE 37

DRIVING FORCE

Colin McRae puts his foot down in the RAC Rally
PAGE 41

WEEKEND MONEY

How much is your house making you this year?
PAGE 51

They have ways of making your transport green
PAGE 45

THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT

NOVEMBER 22 1997

UNITED FRONT NEEDED FOR CATT TO GET THE CREAM



Just for kicks: Mike Catt, the England fly half, gets in some practice at Old Trafford yesterday as the countdown continues towards the confrontation with the All Blacks. Photograph: Marc Aspland

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

OLD TRAFFORD has seen its share of sporting life this past month. Quite apart from the comings and goings of Manchester United, the Great Britain rugby league team passed through a fortnight ago and today the England rugby union team follows suit. Sadly it is virtually impossible to conceive that England will beat New Zealand on the ground where, against all predictions, the country's rugby league players beat Australia.

It is said that the All Blacks, overcome by the aura imposed by the so-called Theatre of Dreams, were less than impressive during their closed training this week and received appropriate admonition from John Hart, their coach. If that is true, then England must hope that playing a match there will have the same effect, because a comparison of the qualities of the teams leaves no room for doubt over the result.

That has been Hart's problem this week, particularly after his midweek team scored 59 points against Emerging England on Tuesday. England, his players have been told, represent one of the most demanding opponents of an entire year in which the All Blacks have been unbeaten. Seven of the visitors' starting

Reality awaits in Theatre of Dreams

XV were at Twickenham four years ago when a well-prepared but limited England side beat them 15-9, and the desire to put the record straight is strong.

Stern reality sets England's present squad several removes from the experienced, skilful, confident unit that they face this afternoon. Even Clive Woodward, the England coach, could not refrain from applauding as he watched the All Blacks go about their business on Tuesday.

Stern reality, too, was John Mitchell's message yesterday. The England assistant coach knows that one game together, against Australia last week, is nothing like enough to even evoke genuine comparison with New Zealand.

"We have to focus on learning, improving, establishing credibility," Mitchell, a New Zealander himself, said. "I believe in the players England have but it will be a huge exercise for them. There are

THE TIMES TABLE
World rankings since the last World Cup.
Full table and details, page 34.

1	NEW ZEALAND
2	FRANCE
3	ENGLAND
4	SOUTH AFRICA
5	AUSTRALIA
6	WALES
7	ARGENTINA
8	SCOTLAND
9	IRELAND
10	ITALY

TODAY: England v New Zealand 2pm (Television: Sky Sports 2, BBC, ITV, delayed transmission, 4.15pm).
Scotland v Australia 3pm (BBC1, live).
France v South Africa 2.45pm.

wide cracks in our system and it's about time we recognised them."

The cracks include the inability of the Allied Dumbard Premiership to provide the degree of intense competition to a sufficient number of English-qualified players that the Super 12 tournament offers southern hemisphere players. In common with an increasing number of other administrators, he seeks a global compe-

tion in which English regional teams can compete.

"The Premiership doesn't look after English rugby at all," Mitchell, who is director of rugby at Sale, said. "There has to be a resolution between the owner-clubs and the Rugby Football Union."

That is for the future. The present offers an occasion that has generated excitement and enthusiasm throughout the North West. A capacity crowd

of 55,000 will hope to see a scrummaging performance much improved on the ragged display against Australia, which inhibited nearly everything else England hoped to do. Set-piece play was one area in which England, down the years, have been consistently competitive, but Mitchell now finds himself having to enforce a different, more attacking, mentality.

Then there is Jonah Lomu. Two years ago, when the giant New Zealand wing was unleashed upon the World Cup, many observers suggested that he was the difference between the All Blacks and the rest. It was a naive view then and remains so, since New Zealand have proved over and over again how effective a force they are without him.

That said, Lomu creates problems. "The management have had faith in me and I have to return that, there's no way I can let them or my teammates down," he said after

learning that a tour designed to reintroduce him gently to top-flight sport after his protracted illness will now restore him to full-blown international rugby. England, rightly, have not designed their defence to cope with one individual, but his ability to suck in defenders will be the ultimate test of their pattern of play.

If England are to compete this afternoon, it will be through an enormous combination of self-will and pride in individual performance. From the speed and guile of Christian Cullen at full back to the rock at loose-head prop that Craig Dowd has become, New Zealand hold the trumps. "They are probably the best side that has ever worn the All-Black jersey," Mitchell said, and it is not being too harsh to suggest that, of England's side, only Martin Johnson and, perhaps, Lawrence Dallaglio, might press for a place among them.

But the opportunity to measure oneself against the best comes all too rarely and, after today, England will know far more of the world that they seek to inhabit. Not only that — within the next fortnight, against South Africa and then New Zealand again, they will have the chance to put that knowledge to some use.

Last hurrah for Parc, page 34
Perry blossoms, page 35
Lawrence Dallaglio, page 35

Chelsea celebrate Zola's big day at Blackburn

By OLIVER HOLLY, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THERE was no cake and there were no candles, but just a few days after a daughter was born to Road Gullit, they were celebrating a different kind of birthday down at Chelsea's training ground yesterday as they prepared for today's match at Blackburn Rovers.

In English league terms, Gianfranco Zola, the diminutive Italian who, with Dennis Bergkamp and Eric Cantona, has been the most successful of the foreign invaders, will be a year old when Chelsea stride out at Ewood

Park to try to press their claims for the championship. Signed from Parma, he made his debut against the Lancashire club 12 months ago.

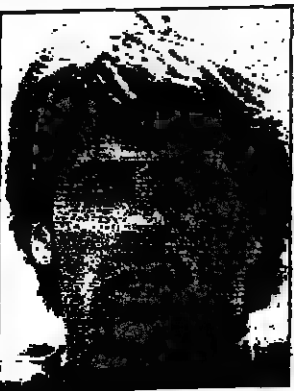
Zola appeared almost sheepish when he spoke at a press conference yesterday about his first year in English football. "It was impossible for me to imagine that I would have such a fantastic 12 months when I first arrived," he said. "You have to be

positive when you start at a new club, but you cannot expect what I have had. It has been a hard year, but the payment for it has been special. We are in a good position in the league and we have to keep going. The signs are positive, but we cannot get lazy."

Praised by Gullit, who applauded the way Zola has adapted to a new culture and said that there was nothing more he could add to his

formidable game, Zola reciprocated by saying he was happy to play his part in the coach's squad system. "Maybe four or five years ago, it would have been hard for me to accept it," Zola said, "but when I play football I am like a child and somebody said to me recently that I am not a child any more. Now it is not a problem for me to miss the odd game."

El Tel on top Down Under, page 36
Match-by-match guide, page 38



Zola: impressive

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than BT?

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Destination	BT	FT	Savings
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SOUTH AFRICA	80p	47p	41%
JAPAN	77p	26p	66%

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S Africa bidding for repeat

BY CHRIS SPENCER
A YEAR ago, South Africa came to the Parc des Princes in Paris on the back of a good win in Bordeaux and snatched a 13-12 victory over France. Today they have a chance to repeat that success in the fifth and final rugby international played at the Parc and become the first team to win successive Tests in France.

Given that they were beaten by the British Isles and in the 1995 tourney in the 1995 tourney, the All Blacks earlier this year, it is a remarkable achievement that Nick Mallett, the South African coach, has led his team to draw a level of performance that is reminiscent of the 1995 World Cup. The Springboks captain said, "It won't be easy, but we must restore our reputation."

South Africa will want to emulate their triumph in the previous Test, which was a 13-12 victory over France. They were quick and imaginative on the field, but they will not want to repeat the last 20 minutes of the game, when France scored two tries from 15-15 down.

The Springboks can do this by playing the scrum half and fly half in the same way as they did in the 1995 World Cup. They were quick and imaginative on the field, but they will not want to repeat the last 20 minutes of the game, when France scored two tries from 15-15 down.

David Hands on a back finding his feet with England



Perry, who will earn his second cap at full back against New Zealand today, is hoping that his exuberant style of play will be suited to Old Trafford

It is the game that does it, but put a 1960s-style haircut on Matt Perry and he would look like Herman — he of the Hermit's, those whose memories of 30-year-old pop groups may be fading at the edges. There is the same fresh, slightly aquiline face that always seemed ready to light up in a smile and Perry adds to the impression with his leggy, coltish appearance.

One of Peter Noone's hits, as lead singer of Herman and the Hermits, would have suited Perry down to the ground: *I'm into something good*. An hour after England's drawn game with Australia a week ago, which even Lawrence Dallaglio had categorised as disappointing, Perry was bubbling over with sheer delight at the moment, at having made his debut for his country and discovering that he had what it takes.

That is how it should be for 20-year-olds with the sporting world at their feet. How often do we find sportsmen full of premature gravitas, analysing every last moment until their eyes appear to be turning square, rather than demonstrating such evident a pleasure at having raised the cup and finding the taste to their liking.

Today Perry wins his second England cap at full back. Last week it was Twickenham, this week it is Old Trafford. Last week it was Australia, 1991 world champions, this week it is New Zealand, best in the world, even if they are not holders of the World Cup. How can

New post lets Perry enjoy life to the full

so much be absorbed so soon? "It's still taking time for my selection to sink in even now," Perry said as England prepared in the Cheshire countryside this week.

Clearly this is so. In his youth — that is to say, a couple of years or so ago — Perry would cheerfully have completed 72 holes of golf in a day but now a mere 18 leaves him tired, given his exertions in his new profession of rugby player and the mental energy required by every member of a new team bedding down in the highest class of company.

Perry, 19, is a regular 7th, regards himself as fortunate in the time — rugby union accepted professionalism, he was about to leave school, was making his way with high-profile Bath and was undecided about his career path. The offer of a one-year contract with the Bath academy of youth helped to decide him, though his association with the club goes back many years.

His father, Brendan, played there and became a club administrator; Matt Perry, the youngest of three children, joined the mini-section as an eight-year-old before moving with his mother, Bernadette, to live in Wales. The sporting noose fastened when he went as a boarder to Millfield, where so many sports are accessible. He tried them all but rugby and cricket became the staple diet.

He "batted and bowled a bit" in the same XI as Ben Hollis and played fly half for the school, the position in which he won colts caps. At that time Richard Hill, the former England scrum half, was still scouring the land for talent to play in Bath's development XV's. Perry received the invitation and needed little coaxing to join the senior training squad.

"It was only when I joined the club again that I changed positions and played at centre and full back, which is my preferred position," Perry said. His maturing process was aided in South Africa, where he spent four months playing with Durban Crusaders' under-21 team and was able to watch Henry Honiball, the leggy Springbok fly half, at close range.

That visit forced him to defer taking up a place at University College, Cardiff, and then the rugby took over. "Everything has happened so quickly this season it has become very important to concentrate on training well. I've found that if you give 100 per cent to that, you'll get the opportunity to play in the first team," he said. "I've learnt things off different players, from Jerry [Guscott] and Mike [Catt]. I also learn a lot with England Under-21 in Australia last summer," he said.

"I never thought I'd be playing against the Australian seniors and I was nervous during the week's build-up because I didn't know what to expect, how much quicker, how much more physical it might be. If it had been New Zealand straight off, it might have been tougher but now I'm looking forward to them."

When England last played New Zealand, during the 1995 World Cup, Perry watched with his mates in the senior common room at Millfield. "It was unbelievable, they created so much space in a tournament where there just hadn't been any, defences were so tight." That being so, he knows what to expect today.

TODAY'S TEAMS AT OLD TRAFFORD			
ENGLAND		NEW ZEALAND	
M. B. Perry (Bath)	15	C. M. Cullen (Manawatu)	
D. Rees (Sale)	14	J. W. Wilson (Otago)	
W. J. R. Greenwood (Leicester)	13	F. E. Bunce (North Harbour)	
P. R. de la Haye (Bath)	12	A. J. Leven (Wellington)	
A. A. Mchale (Bath)	11	J. T. Lewis (Counties)	
M. J. C. Catt (Bath)	10	A. P. Marshall (Canterbury)	
K. P. Bracken (Saracens)	9	J. W. Marshall (Canterbury)	
J. Leonard (Harlequins)	8	C. W. Dowd (Auckland)	
S. C. Gifford (Leicester)	7	R. J. Hewitt (Southland)	
J. J. Gifford (Leicester)	6	G. M. Brown (Auckland)	
D. O. Johnson (Leicester)	5	D. Jones (North Harbour)	
S. S. Archer (Newcastle)	4	R. W. Brooke (Auckland)	
L. B. N. Dallaglio (Worcester)	3	T. C. Randall (Otago)	
A. R. R. Garsdale (Leicester)	2	J. A. K. Marshall (Otago)	
A. J. D. Garsdale (Leicester)	1	Z. V. Brooke (Auckland)	
Captain: P. Marshall (Auckland)		Captain: P. Marshall (Auckland)	
REPLACEMENTS: 16 J. S. Hensley (Leicester), 17 P. J. Greyson (Northampton), 18 N. A. Black (Leicester), 19 D. J. Garsdale (Auckland), 20 G. C. Rowntree (Leicester), 21 A. E. Long (Bath)		REPLACEMENTS: 16 J. S. Hensley (Leicester), 17 P. J. Greyson (Northampton), 18 N. A. Black (Leicester), 19 D. J. Garsdale (Auckland), 20 G. C. Rowntree (Leicester), 21 A. E. Long (Bath)	

Scotland attempt to emerge from mist

THE Lloyds TSB International between Scotland and Australia at Murrayfield should provide both countries with a clearer picture of where they stand now and what they can expect in the future. Australia are ending what for them has been an unsatisfactory season, while Scotland are starting on a new venture with a mixture of optimism and trepidation.

Since the sides met at Murrayfield last year — when Australia won 29-19 — Scotland have underperformed in the five nations' championship before partially redeeming themselves on their development tour of South Africa. With five players also contributing to the success of the British Isles, Scotland appeared to be emerging from the mists with a better idea of their best side and, more importantly, with some strength in depth.

However, a combination of injuries and selectorial whim means the Scotland side that plays today shows 11 changes, two of them positional, from that which lost to Australia for the sixth consecutive time last November. There is a new captain in Andy Nicol, and four

new caps, Grant McKelvey, at hooker, Scott Murray, at lock, Adam Roxburgh, at blind-side flanker and James Craig, on the right wing.

Duncan Hodge has also been drafted in this week to replace the injured Rowen Shepherd at full back. It will be Hodge's first full cap and he will also be the goal kicker. It is a gamble given that Hodge normally plays at either fly half or centre. But the selectors have placed considerable faith in the three-quarter line, which shows attacking potential, and wanted to keep disruption to a minimum.

With Jim Telfer and Ian McGeechan now heavily involved in team preparation it will be interesting to see whether the dynamic game plan that served the Lions so well will be the blueprint Scotland adopt.

They would hope so, but the loss through injury of the forwards, Tom Smith, Dodie Weir and Rob Wainwright, is a significant setback to those ambitions, and the Scottish pack is inexperienced and looks lightweight. Winning enough

ball against the Australians, who did so much damage to England last week, will be their difficulty.

Nicol, who leads Scotland for the first time in a full international, agreed that winning and, more importantly, keeping possession would be the key. "Australia have top-class backs but if they do not have the ball they cannot use it," he said yesterday. "There is a great spirit in our squad; fresh ideas, enthusiasm and exuberance can overcome any rawness."

Whether that will be enough to lift the Scots, who are notoriously slow out of the blocks in the autumn, remains to be seen.

With Townsend at fly half anything is possible, but after Australia's lacklustre draw against England, in which they at least scored two tries, Rod Macqueen will hope that his influence is beginning to bear fruit after Greg Smith's unhappy tenure. Had John Eales converted any one of four missed kicks then Australia would have won at Twickenham.

Scotland last beat Australia in Brisbane in 1982, the only occasion

TODAY'S TEAMS AT MURRAYFIELD			
SCOTLAND		AUSTRALIA	
D. W. Hodge (Worcestershire)	15	S. Larkham (ACT)	
J. M. Craig (West of Scotland)	14	B. N. Time (Queensland)	
A. G. Stanger (Hawick)	13	T. J. Horan (Queensland)	
A. V. Tait (Newcastle)	12	P. W. Howard (ACT)	
K. M. Logan (Worcestershire)	11	J. W. Roff (ACT)	
S. P. J. Townsend (Northampton)	10	E. P. Harty (Queensland)	
A. D. Nicol (Bath)	9	G. M. Eadie (ACT)	
D. I. W. Hodge (Bath)	8	R. L. L. Harty (NSW)	
G. McKelvey (Worcestershire)	7	M. A. Foley (Queensland)	
A. J. S. Marshall (Northampton)	6	A. T. Harty (NSW)	
S. J. Campbell (Dundee HFF)	5	J. A. Eales (Queensland)	
S. Marshall (Bedford)	4	O. Finegan (ACT)	
A. Roxburgh (Kelso)	3	B. J. Robinson (ACT)	
I. R. Smith (Mossley)	2	V. O'Connell (NSW)	
E. W. Peters (Bath)	1		
Captain: W. T. S. Marshall (South Africa)		Captain: W. T. S. Marshall (South Africa)	
REPLACEMENTS: 16 C. A. Jones (Leicester), 17 C. M. Chalmers (Leicester), 18 G. Armstrong (Dundee), 19 S. D. G. Garsdale (Worcestershire), 20 G. Garsdale (Worcestershire), 21 G. C. Harty (West of Scotland)		REPLACEMENTS: 16 M. Harty (ACT), 17 S. J. P. Harty (NSW), 18 D. J. Wilson (Queensland), 19 M. O'Connell (ACT), 20 A. Harty (NSW), 21 M. Caputo (ACT)	

Our self-belief and desire mean prospects are not all black

If we are going to take on New Zealand and win, then continuity is the key. England have to apply pressure and we have to keep the ball, not just through one or two phases of play, but through three, four or five if we are to give ourselves a realistic chance of scoring.

That was the most disappointing aspect of the game with Australia at Twickenham last Saturday, and the Australians felt it as much as we did. We failed to put them under the sort of pressure that we have created in other matches and they failed to test us in the way that we needed to be tested.

Australia did score two tries, but both from broken play and both from ball that was initially England's. There was no build-up of pressure, such as the British Lions achieved in South Africa and which the All Blacks themselves do so well — as we saw against Ireland last Saturday and against Emerging England at Huddersfield on Tuesday.

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO



everyone watching that New Zealand are the best in the business at punishing mistakes. Emerging England were punished for every turnover, even though they went 9-0 down, there was no sense of panic among the All Blacks, just a total belief that they could impose their rhythm on the game, and it will take an awesome display to counteract that effect today. But that's the challenge and it's not one that we will step back from.

It will be the first time that I have played against them, which only emphasises how few fixtures we have had against them. The last time England sent a tour party to New Zealand was the B team of 1992 and in 1993, when I was a member of the England team at the World Cup sevens, I was rested from the side that played New Zealand. Unfortunately, I missed the last World Cup so this occasion is an exciting one for me.

I have tremendous respect for New Zealand rugby and for this team, which has clearly demonstrated that they possess individuals who are among the best in their respective positions in the world. I'm delighted that we have two games against them. One of the frustrations of the game with Australia is that, having discovered more about them, we do not have the chance to put into practice what we have learnt, though I accept the danger of oversaturation of internationals.

It may be that most people will write us off but, for the team, that is not an issue. It is what we believe ourselves that matters. In that respect, I was disappointed by the crowd at Twickenham last Saturday: you need your own crowd to get behind you before the game starts, not merely when the odd passage of play in the opposing 22 takes their fancy.

We need to create as many edges as possible over the opposition and one of those is having a very atmospheric stadium in which to invite other countries to play. I agree that the style and standard of rugby helps to generate a buzz among supporters, but there has to be a meeting place between expectation and reality.

This England team has only just been brought together, one third of it was entirely new against Australia and we were up against high-class opponents.

That's a situation where we need the crowd behind us from the word go and I'm sure that Old Trafford will be buzzing from 11am onwards. There's bound to be a huge amount of northern passion: I've watched football at Old Trafford and I can safely say the atmosphere will be different to that of a normal rugby crowd.

My previous visit is a reminder that even the best of teams can come unstuck. It was a couple of years ago and I was following Chelsea against Manchester United. Chelsea, who are a bit of a bogey side for United, won. This England team know that we have to improve as a side, but if our supporters see the players busting a gut to do just that, they cannot go home unhappy.

'Atmosphere will be very different from a normal rugby crowd'

though the atmosphere surrounding our present series is far removed from that of, say, the first international against the Springboks in Cape Town during the summer, when the only people who believed we could win were ourselves.

Everyone else presumed that we would be taken to the cleaners and that brought its response from the British and Irish players. Now we are at home and, though I accept that England are massive underdogs, make no mistake, the young squad is full of enthusiasm and the desire to do well.

The players carry no emotional baggage about playing the southern-hemisphere countries on a regular basis and coming off second best. We may lack maturity as a team, but we expected to go in against Australia and win — there was no consideration of defeat, let alone a draw, which is why the sense of anticlimax was so intense. But we have learnt from last week, individually and collectively, and the result was by no means a damning one.

The self-belief is the same before the game at Old Trafford today, even against the most effective team in the world. The game on Tuesday made it clear to

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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Climbing back to the top Down Under

After a rollercoaster career, the world stage beckons once more for Terry Venables

It is a wild ride with Terry. It is worldwide now, too. Not just White Hart Lane and Lancaster Gate. Sometimes it is wide-eyed and breathless, like Michael Palin rushing for some overcrowded paddle-steamer; sometimes it is sassy, like Jonathan Rabin on a hulking transatlantic freighter; sometimes it is more brooding, like Marlow setting off up the Thames on his yawl and his voyage to the heart of darkness.

You can take the tour with the most captivating, compelling yarn-spinner in English football from a cosy little back room in a Knightsbridge wine bar. It starts in Australia these days with the improbable tale of Venables coaching the antipodeans to the brink of the World Cup finals in France next summer. That part, at least, like a dump of Marlow's sky, is a "benign immensity of unstained light".

But there are times when Venables' career has resembled one of the dark places of the earth, and he takes you there, too. Unflinchingly, he heads back to Alan Sugar, the Tottenham Hotspur chairman, back to some of those dark days before Euro 96 when he realised that the apparatus at the Football Association were treating him with a distaste that his achievements as England coach did not warrant.

There are the happy times too, of course — the winning of the Spanish championship with Barcelona — but, somehow, the collapse of his relationship with the FA is the best part of the journey, the part when it gets bumpy. This is where the passion rises in Venables' voice.

It might not have the excitement of, say, the match in Teheran today, where Australia play the first of two matches against Iran in which an aggregate victory will book their place in France, but it gives you a glimpse of the nobility beneath the ducking and diving. East-End wide boy, El Tel façade that has been pinned on him.

For a moment, when he talks about those struggles with Sugar and how the FA tried to humiliate him before Euro 96 — when they said that

he had to prove himself and that they thought they might just be able to persuade Noel White, then chairman of the FA international committee, to give him a 12-month extension to his contract as England coach — you listen and feel like Rod Steiger sitting next to Marlon Brando in that taxi on the waterfront.

"I am actually quite proud of what I did in not standing for that," Venables said. "I am quietly proud of the way I handled it, because I don't think you should keep a job under any circumstances. No one should do that or else you are not worth the salt."

"People say, 'Oh you dope, you should have done this or that', but I shouldn't have. I shouldn't have done that, otherwise I am nobody. I am now the coach of Australia, lose or draw and England and Glenn [Hoddle, the England coach] and everybody at the FA are happy and I'm happy, because I have got complete belief in what I do."

"There is a little envy of what is happening to England. I will say that. But regrets? Please, if you believe anything, believe me, because I have this problem. People say, 'You are just saying this' or 'you are just scheming', but I have no regrets whatsoever. I have got me to live with. In later years, I will be saying, 'Well done, son, you didn't say to Noel White, oh please let me have another chance. Who is he to tell me? It is not on. And that is my honest feeling. I have said it to you as succinctly as I have ever said it.'"

His tone grows more reflective, even a little weary, when discussing Sugar, who has attempted to bring down Venables just as Venables, now the Portsmouth chairman, has tried to bring him down as they have dragged each other through the courts.

"My life has been full of happy times," he said, "but I have had two or three years of a situation where most likely Sugar and me, if we had our time again, we would most likely have dealt with it in a different way. I have not enjoyed it and he hasn't enjoyed it. I wouldn't think, but



Venables admits to being a little envious of England's success, but he has plenty to smile about himself, having taken Australia to the brink of the World Cup finals next summer

we both want to win and we won't give in. So, it's been maybe unnecessary, but sometimes you get dealt hands that you have to deal with."

"What do you do? Walk away and people say you are guilty. They tell you it's only the lawyers that make the money and I agree with that

that not only will Australia make it to the World Cup finals, but also that, once there, fate will pitch them against England."

Since Venables was persuaded earlier this year to take over as coach of an Australia team that boasts promising young FA Cup-winning players such as Mark Bosnich, of Aston Villa, Stan Lazarides, of West Ham United, and Harry Kewell, of Leeds United, they have won 12 successive matches.

Some were against international novices such as the Solomon Islands, others against nations such as Hungary and Norway. At the beginning of last month, Australia produced what many consider to be their best performance, a 3-0 win away to highly-rated Tunisia.

Today, they will try to make it a lucky thirteenth win against Iran before attempting to complete the job in Melbourne a week later. For Venables, it will be the culmination of the latest in a long line of repair jobs that have seen him drafted in like a doctor patching up a patient and then told to leave when the recovery is complete.

"If I look back over the last jobs that I have had," he said, "they have all been ailing teams that I have made feel better again. Tottenham was a hard job. People do not remember how the club was and how the players were when I took over. Everyone was at the end of their careers. Gough had left, Hoddle had left, Ardiles had finished. Clemence had finished. I built it up again. It was terrific, then you get it right and you're off."

And then you get an ailing England and you get it right and you're off. And an Australian team that wants to hit the

headlines and you get it right and then for different reasons, maybe because of distances, I might be off."

"The thing now is to get through these two games against Iran or it will all be academic. There is an incredible explosion of interest from the Australian people, but you are always going to struggle with a sport, I believe, that is not driven by television. If it is not driven by television, it will not prosper quickly enough. But at the same time, Australia cannot afford to be out of this world game. They want to be in it and they are trying their best, but their culture won't allow it."

"Before I went there, I had a lot of trouble with the fact that everyone wanted an Australian coach. I understand that. To be fair, I find them quite good. If they want to have a row, they'll have one and I'll have one as well and we'll have a beer and that's how it should be. I find it a healthy sort of fight. I have always loved a challenge."

"There is not a chance of even dreaming about me having divided loyalties if Australia play England in the World Cup. I gave every ounce I had for England when I was coach and I loved it. It was my home country and it was a special feeling. To the day I die, I am very proud of that and they can't take that away. But if it comes to Australia against England, not a chance."

And so the journey with the Soccerros continues. From Teheran to Melbourne and then, if the fates are kind, on to Marseille for the World Cup draw on December 4 and the competition next June. Terry Venables could have been nobody if he had sacrificed his pride. Instead he is somebody. He is a contender again.

OLIVER HOLT



wholeheartedly. I am poorer in one respect and richer in another for knowing what has gone on and how naive over the years you are about what goes on and how far tangles can reach when it comes to power. It is frightening for the man in the street."

It has always been to the man in the street that Venables has instinctively appealed. He has got the common touch, a kind of natural affinity with the public that someone such as Tony Blair has successfully managed to manufacture for himself. Even though he is the England coach no longer, there are still those who are openly hoping

Chile trio ready to turn up the heat



The 17-year-old Pelé, centre, galvanised the 1958 Brazil World Cup-winning team

Cometh the World Cup, cometh a new star. Pelé in Sweden, 1958. Amarildo, when Pelé fell by the wayside, in Chile, 1962. Geoff Hurst, of England, four years later, when the West Ham United player replaced Jimmy Greaves, promptly and powerfully headed the winning goal against Argentina in that bruising quarter-final at Wembley and added another three in the final, the second of which may or may not have been valid.

Who, in France, next year, will emerge with such kudos? Marcelo Salas, of Chile, is certainly a candidate, a remarkably prolific goalscorer for both club and country. At the moment, rich clubs all over Europe, Manchester United among them, are falling over themselves to prise him from River Plate, of Buenos Aires, who themselves bought him from Universidad Católica of Santiago in 1996 after their local rivals, Boca Juniors, had failed in their bid.

Salas just cannot stop scoring, except when he's injured, as he was for a while last season. He got a hat-trick for his country against Colombia in the World Cup eliminators in a 4-1 victory in Santiago, all of them scored in the first half.

Ivan Zamorano set up two of them and the big centre forward, now with Internazionale, has been offered in trade for Salas by the Milanese club. Together, the two of them could get goals in France and they might yet be reinforced by the third outstanding Chilean striker, Rogelito, of Rangers, who has been injured for so long.

Italy, having made such heavy weather of qualification, are talking about bringing in new, fresh, younger players, but they are hardly thick on the ground.

The best of their youngsters is surely the precocious 19-year-old goalkeeper, Gianluigi Buffon. Angelo Peruzzi stands in

Is there a new Pelé ready to grab headlines in the World Cup?

BRIAN GLANVILLE



his way at the moment, but Buffon already looks safer.

England have three real candidates for France among their under-21 players. Rio Ferdinand was very properly given his first cap against Cameroon and should surely stay in the team, whether or not Glenn Hoddle goes for broke and risks him as an out-and-out libero, in the Franz Beckenbauer mould. Ferdinand is surely a better bet than Gareth Southgate, a less naturally gifted defender with an odd propensity to basic error.

Emile Heskey should also be considered. People are talking about him as a centre forward and, in such a role, he ran rings around the usually dominant Sol Campbell when Leicester City beat Tottenham Hotspur at Filbert Street.

I see Heskey as an all-rounder, an ambidextrous winger as well as centre

forward of power, pace and more skill than people give him credit for.

Then there is the marvellous boy, Liverpool's 17-year-old Michael Owen, with opportunistic flair, a superb burst of pace and remarkable self-confidence.

How young is too young? In 1958, Brazil did not hesitate to put in the 17-year-old Pelé, who, initially injured, proceeded to transform the team and score half a dozen goals in the last three games, two of them true masterpieces in a final.

Twenty years later, Diego Maradona, at the same age, could have graced the Argentina team, but his mentor, Cesar Luis Menotti, would not take the risk and the inside-left place went to the "safer" choice, Alonso.

Argentina won through in the end, but though Alonso did not fail, Maradona might have given the team an easier ride to success.

South Korea, who always seem to qualify and who gave Germany such a fright in the 1994 tournament, have a new hero in their 23-year-old striker, Young Soo Choi; the scorer of eight goals in eight qualifying games, among them all three in the victory against Uzbekistan. Yoo Sang Chul, who makes the wheels turn in midfield, is another who could succeed.

The United States, who came through so strongly in the end, after earlier wobbles, have rehabilitated a player well known in England. Roy Wegerle, 34, is indeed no youngster, but, revitalised after nine knee operations, he has in turn revitalised America's attack after being discarded for a couple of years.

He scored twice against Canada and has been a new player since he moved from Colorado to the Washington club, whose success in the American soccer league had much to do with his form. Chelsea, Luton Town and Queens Park Rangers will remember him well.

Mark Hodgkinson's Barnsley odyssey takes in the muddy waters of marketing

Efforts to refine the talk of the town

The Mullins of marketing relish a challenge. They sit around swivel-top tables fuelling inspiration with numerous cups of coffee. After much chin-stroking and brow-furrowing their caffeine-kindled schemes catch fire and — hey presto — the dream is yours, at a price.

Before they can sell the idea, they have to sell the name. If your client happens to be called Barnsley, that is where the enigma begins. "I think it's just the way it is pronounced by the locals. I mean, Barnet is a similar word, but the rounded 'a' means it sounds OK," Jim Stringer, senior copywriter at Cicero, one of the leading advertising agencies in the North, said.

Barnsley, especially in the South Yorkshire tongue, does sound irrefutably downbeat. The vowel in the first syllable is flat and long, while the second syllable is clipped. Phonetically, it would be spelt: "Baarns-lī". To aggravate matters, Barnsley is stuck with an

image as a grim, soot-blackened town where the cornerstones of life — birth, school, work, death — are played out in a drab, monotonous rhythm. Its 225,000 residents know full well how their town is perceived, and, though they may claim not to care, they are affronted and hurt. In fact, much of the town's character — warm but weary, stoical but sentimental — is shaped by this eternal "us and them" perspective.

Football has finally supplied a fingerhold on the kind of glamour that Barnsley covets. When Barnsley FC were promoted to the FA Cup Premier League, hope and self-esteem sweetened the daily grind. Barnsley's tourist information centre has seen a 200 per cent increase in inquiries since promotion. "The club's success has given us an extra boost," Ann Unisz, a tourism officer, said. "People have heard of us now and we have a higher profile."

While most visiting supporters will see merely Oakwell, others will choose to spend the weekend in Barnsley. They will discover that 10 per cent of the borough is in the Peak District National Park and that 70 per cent of it is designated green belt. There are country homes, museums, art galleries, country parks, monuments, walled gardens, steam railways and markets. Cicero has the county of Cumbria as a client and should Barnsley call, it is ready for the challenge. "I think changing Barnsley's image would have to be done gradually. There is too much history to shrug off in a short space of time," Stringer said.

"It would be no use overdoing it and trying to fool people that Barnsley is something that it isn't. We couldn't say that everything is rosy in the garden when people remember miners scrapping with policemen at the pit gates just a few years ago."

Any marketing sheen placed on Barnsley should not be allowed to camouflage the truth. The place is beset by economic problems and a new report has revealed that it is the poorest town in Britain. A glimpse through the local

newspaper, the *Barnsley Chronicle*, reveals a panoply of social problems. The role of dishonour includes the usual smalltown amalgam of drug dealers, drunks, aggressors, racists, television licence dodgers and people who relieve themselves in hedge-rows after a night on the tiles.

The football club has done much to ameliorate the town's sullied image, both through its success and its enterprising style of play. But this week it was drawn into ignominy when Dean Jones, a 20-year-old reserve team player, failed a drug test. He has the woeful distinction of being the first player at a Premier-ship club to do so.

Jones, who was born in Barnsley and still lives in the town, tested positive for amphetamine and could face a

suspension. He has never played for the first team, or indeed been in a first-team squad. In recent weeks he has also struggled to make the reserves. No matter: the incident has brought shame on the club. "He was tested on a Monday morning and the feeling locally is that he had taken something over the weekend, perhaps on a Saturday night and it was still in his system," an insider said.

It is widely accepted that each generation has its own particular palate for the use of intoxicants and Jones, if his drug-taking is proved to be solely recreational, is far from atypical. The difference is that he is a professional footballer with Barnsley FC, and Barnsley, the town and the club, can do without yet another slur on its good name, however it is pronounced.

LIFE AT THE TOP



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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Swiss role puts Spurs in a jam

Had Tottenham Hotspur announced this week that George Graham or Glenn Hoddle or Barbara Windsor was coming to take over at White Hart Lane, they might have been saved. As it is, they are as doomed as the Spice Girls, and with much the same leadership problems. The tetchy, dreary and dry appointment of "Hans" Christian Gross this week is the latest tiny shift from a club that specialises in begrudging little changes, unaware that we live in the age of Big Gestures and that Tottenham and their bored supporters might only come back to life with a bomb under them.

Spurs used to be such a jazzy side too. But there they go, blindly leaping aboard the borrowed ideology that a sober and serious continental "technician" will come in and make them look intense and interesting. How they found someone less charismatic than Gerry Francis beggars belief, but this new po-faced shaping up to steal even Arsène Wenger's kiljoy crown, and believe me, whatever small on-field benefits Wenger has so far brought to Highbury are a high price to pay for the man being such an out-and-out drag.

Tottenham are lost. They have been lost for ages and will remain lost. They are confusing monolithic insecurity and bullshit inscrutability with Manchester United's

Gazza ruins punchline

AFTER sharing a soothing cold drink with Paul Gascoigne last Sunday, I wove him off to the airport sobbing into a handkerchief and imploring him not to be a stranger. "Make some time for yourself, Paul," I say. "Go nuts and get sent off." I say. "Get yourself a nice relaxing ban." I say. That's the trouble with footballers. No sense of humour.

grandeur or Liverpool's warmth. Tottenham supporters — famous for their boot-licking timidity — will surely not take one more example of their board's bloody-mindedness. All clubs think deep down that their supporters are nosy outsiders who, unfortunately, are "the marker", but Spurs have begun to make Buck House look like Liberty Hall. Talk about Mother Knows Best.

First, Gerry Francis. When did it finally sink in at boardroom level that it wasn't happening for him? I know he will whip out the statistics book to prove otherwise, but football clubs do not live in statistics books. They are experienced in the hearts, eyes and wallets of their supporters. Altogether now: the difference between staff and supporters at a club is that supporters pay to get in and staff are paid to come in. Put a real slant on a match, that! So when supporters say bugger off to a manager — or player, come to that — it isn't meant as a subtle flagging to the director's box of some possible future discontent. It means bugger off. Now. Respect it.

There's no more empty phrase in football than when a beleaguered boss, after being booed by the crowd, puffs himself up and says: "They are entitled to their opinion but I'm not a quitter." As though there's some deeper appreciation of football that supporters aren't quite up to speed with. "Not a quitter? Be a quitter! Quit! You've had a go, it fell flat, walk away. Stoic transience is not necessarily noble. Sometimes you're simply being a berk.

This stubborn loftiness of the modern big-time British manager is all Alex Ferguson's fault. For, as you are never allowed to forget, Fergie, eventually "got it right. Now every two-bob, thick-ear, ex-pro in a hot seat is given licence to drive a club into the sea because, after all, didn't it take Fergie a long time to "get it right"? Well, you know what? I don't think Fergie did "get it right."



November 15, 1994. The warning signs are already in evidence for the new Tottenham manager

DANNY BAKER



I reckon he has very little idea of what he was doing so different pre and post that dramatic 6-2 victory at Arsenal in 1990 that got the present juggernaut rolling. Suddenly his patchy side got a little air under its wings and if it made him look like a master genius who had it all mapped out. He's undoubtedly

by a great manager but only he knows the amount of smoke, mirrors, PR and sleight of hand that brings you to such a place.

And now we have the dour Christian Gross, late of Grasshopper, and unless I'm thinking about someone else entirely, former manager of the excellent Alpine Horn Swiss restaurant in London's noisy Wardour Street. His first directive towards the White Hart Lane faithful is that discipline, punctuality and grooming will count for everything in his version of Spurs. They may be on their way down but they will go down in an orderly fashion, on time and wearing sober blazers with slacks.

So here goes. I hereby predict that this man's reign at Tottenham will be one of the most disruptive, disastrous and embarrassing periods in its history. Alan Sugar will blame disruptive outside elements and point out that Herr Gross was a great manager who should have been given time like Alex Ferguson... although, yes, on reflection, the insistence upon walking canes and monocles was a publicity fiasco. As per usual, the supporters will have seen this coming and, wouldn't it be nice if, just this once, somebody emerged from the ivory tower and said to them: "You know, you told us we were going wrong a year ago

Bow tie collars rattle market

AFTER my story two weeks ago of The Hopeless Penitent of Millwall I have received a lot of correspondence regarding similarly poor merchandise from all sorts of different clubs. However, appalling though the standard of many official products may be, the ultimate tale of football memorabilia concerns The Home Made Wooden Bow Tie of Dundee United.

A caller to the radio show told me that when he was a young lad many years ago he was just about the most fanatical supporter Dundee United had. One year, when his birthday rolled around, his father asked him if he wanted a scarf or bobble hat that might identify him as a loyal fan wherever he went. Two pop's surprise, the boy asked for a football bow tie. Now, whereas many a father might have explained that there is no such thing as a football bow tie, this one simply rolled up his sleeves, spit on his hands and disappeared into the workshop. He emerged on birthday morning with a Football Bow Tie. It was made out of plywood, roughly two feet from side to side, painted in the club colours — orange and black — with the word United spanning its length in white.

It turned out that the piece could be worn in the traditional bow tie manner by the simple fastening of

a dog collar which had been nailed on to the reverse side — the collar not needed elsewhere since the family pet had been run over some months previously. This he did at the very next home game collecting, as he put it, "quite a few complimentary notices." However, this notoriety came at a price. For quite early on it became apparent that the knot part of the bow tie was deceptively bulbous and refused to allow his chin to settle on it with any comfort.

After much thought and considering the thing from all angles, his father headed once more for the workshop, emerging with the bow tie intact but now, instead of the dog collar arrangement, it was nailed to the end of a long broom handle. Still clearly a bow tie, but no longer a practical one. The caller purred with pride as he recalled how the very next week he entered the ground holding aloft the two-foot plywood bow tie like a Roman Centurion at the head of his legion — passing those who boasted mere rosettes and rattles, with a superior stride. Sadly, the story ends on a downbeat note because when I inquired where the Home Made Wooden Bow Tie of Dundee United is today, he replied with the phrase that represents the constant sorrow of grown men everywhere: "I think my mother threw it out..."

Pleat's credit notes lose their currency

STOP PRESS! As I write this, the rumour of David Pleat's wooing to Tottenham looks like it might become fact. It's actually touching the way football fans are suckers for believing that when old favourites return, so will old triumphs, but as anyone who went to see the Steely Dan reunion tour last year will know, even the mightiest turns should never go home. Besides, shouldn't managers fresh from disastrous spells at big clubs have to sit some kind of exam or at least spend some time in a cell as penance for messing everyone about? Pleat may be a superb chap and a party animal

but is anyone seriously denying that his track record is smelling a bit gamey? He certainly has his powerful friends. I couldn't believe it when it was suggested both in print and on television that Sheffield Wednesday's 5-0 win the week after Pleat's fingernails were finally prised from the door frame was proof that he was on the verge of getting it right. Duh? They're bottom, he leaves, they win 5-0. He gets credit. Using that logic, Pete Best was responsible for Sergeant Pepper.

□ Danny Baker is on Talk Radio (1053-1089am) every Saturday from 5.30pm.

Swansea's plight typifies the struggle for survival

By Russell Kempson

AS THE FA Carling Premiership rolls relentlessly on, counting its cash in millions, many in the Nationwide League are struggling to make ends meet. The difficulties of Swansea City, Oxford United and Scarborough are genuine, not imagined.

Of the three, Swansea appear in the most imminent danger. Their third division fixture against Chester City at the Vetch Field this afternoon was called off yesterday because safety work had not been carried out. They were given a deadline of noon today by the city's safety of sports grounds committee, but realised they would not meet it.

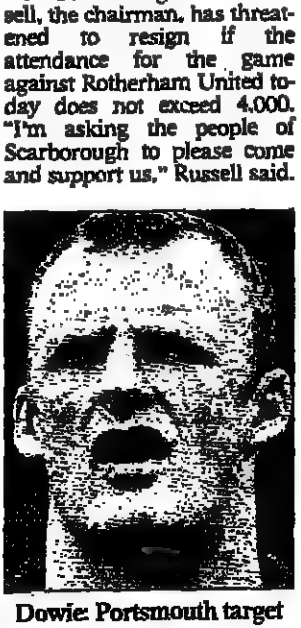
Swansea have to carry out repairs to a back-up electricity generator, update the internal radio network at the ground and remove loose masonry from under the North Bank. "This work must be done for supporters to be admitted to the ground," John Spence, chairman of the safety council, said. The League is to conduct an inquiry.

Oxford's predicament involves finance or, rather, the lack of it. Denis Smith, the manager, has been told to prune his first division squad from 25 to possibly 21 — all the players were put up for sale earlier this week — and the



club is only keeping afloat because its main creditors are behaving "co-operatively". Several backroom staff are expected to lose their jobs.

At Scarborough, John Russell, the chairman, has threatened to resign if the attendance for the game against Rotherham United today does not exceed 4,000. "I'm asking the people of Scarborough to please come and support us," Russell said.



Dowie: Portsmouth target

"We've been through a lot in the last few years and we've got to see some encouragement from our supporters. If we don't, this will be a Judgment Day."

Scarborough are eighth in the third division but attracted only 1,406 spectators to watch their 3-2 victory over Swansea in midweek. "Rotherham is a derby match and we want to see 4,000 fans," Russell said. "If we don't get that response, then I can't carry on."

Elsewhere, business was less grim yesterday. Swindon Town completed the signing of George Ndah, 22, the gangly Crystal Palace striker, for £500,000. He will make his debut against Middlesbrough this afternoon, replacing Chris Hey, Swindon's 13-goal leading scorer, who is suspended.

Bruce Rioch, the former assistant manager of Queens Park Rangers, has turned down an approach from Northern Ireland to succeed Bryan Hamilton, who was dismissed last month.

Meanwhile, Iain Dowie, the Northern Ireland and West Ham United striker, is considering a move to Portsmouth, the struggling first division club. Portsmouth have made an offer of £250,000. "Pompey are a great club with lots of tradition," Dowie said. "I need first-team football so a move would be attractive."

Nicholson cleared in drug case

SHANE NICHOLSON, the West Bromwich Albion defender, was yesterday cleared of deliberately taking an amphetamine when he called a witness, who admitted slipping the drug into the player's drink for a prank (John Goodbody writes).

However, the Football Association warned Nicholson of "the stupidity of spending time in bars frequented by drug users". The witness, who was not named, now faces possible criminal charges for possessing the illegal substance.

A three-man FA disciplinary commission found Nicholson, a full back at the Nationwide League first division club, guilty of a technical breach of the FA's drugs code, but not guilty of wilful misconduct. Nicholson provided the urine sample at the West Bromwich training ground on October 13.

Steve Double, the FA spokesman, said: "The witness told the commission that he was shocked when he heard that Nicholson had subsequently failed a drugs test, so he contacted the player and agreed to admit to his actions before the commission. The witness made the admission despite being warned that his actions could constitute a criminal offence and it was the FA's policy to report such matters."

Miller takes over at Aberdeen

By Kevin McCarrar

VICTORIES have been scarce for Aberdeen, but they did at least win one significant battle yesterday. Alex Miller was appointed as manager at Pittodrie after the club had overcome resistance from Coventry City, where he was assistant to Gordon Strachan. Miller had no contract with the English club and could not be prevented from returning to Scotland.

Bryan Richardson, the chairman of Coventry, had thought that Miller could be persuaded to accept an offer to remain at Highfield Road. "He spoke at great length and from the heart, but the lure of the Aberdeen job was too great," Miller said.

Miller was manager of Hibernian until September 1996, having spent ten years in the post but then resigned. His decision to leave Easter Road was influenced, in part, by the antipathy of supporters who may simply have tired of him. In coaching circles, however, he has never gone out of fashion.

He will continue to hold the position of assistant manager of Scotland and his tactical acumen is viewed as a significant element in the achievements of the national team. At Pittodrie, of course, the refinements of strategy may not be regarded as a priority at present and the attainment of ordinary, competent form will be the first objective. Aberdeen are bottom of the Bell's Scottish League premier division

and play Dunfermline Athletic at East End Park this afternoon.

There may be a few advantages in the dismal circumstances, since they relieve Miller of some of the traditional burdens placed upon an Aberdeen manager by the supporters of the club who, understandably, are apt to refer to the high achievements of the 1980s.

For the time being, at least, Miller will be applauded if he only leads the club as far as the security of a mid-table position, and reservations about the manager's past will also be suppressed. Miller, at Hibernian, was often accused of mistaking sterility for prudence and creating a team whose inhibitions thwarted its potential.

Jim Leighton, the goalkeeper who was signed by him for Hibernian and now plays for Aberdeen, disagrees with that viewpoint and points out that Miller tended to buy attacking players. Admirers of the manager will also claim that limited funds at Easter Road meant that the newcomers were not good enough to alter the character of the team.

Funds tend to be available at Aberdeen and Roy Aitken, Miller's predecessor who was sacked two weeks ago, spent £2 million in the close season alone. "This is the biggest club I have ever managed, make no mistake about that," said

without Brian Laudrup, Rino Gattuso, Gordon Durie and Paul Gascoigne, who begins a five-match suspension, when they play Motherwell at Fir Park. Marc Rieper, Alan Stubbs and Craig Burley will be missing from the Celtic side that plays Dundee United.

Heart of Midlothian, the leaders in the premier division, meet Kilmarnock at Tynecastle tomorrow.

Coz deal breaks new ground at Kennel-worth Road

IT'S a dog's life at Luton Town — usual story: losing team, crowd unrest, etc. — but Coz Kohler is happier than most. Coz is the alsatian-border collie cross owned by David Kohler, the Luton chairman, and has recently secured himself personal sponsorship. The deal was done by Alan Corkhill, the managing director of a local printing firm, and includes Coz's photograph, proudly wearing a Luton shirt in the matchday programme.

Corkhill used to support Kim Grant, the former Luton striker, who is now with Millwall. "Unfortunately, Kim wasn't one of the most popular players," he said. "So this time, I thought I'd go for the most likeable living creature at the club, which apparently is Coz." Corkhill reckons that his canine friend — help out Luton's ailing defence — "he'd bring an extra pair of legs" — or add bite to the midfield.

Jamaica in-crowd

Many a player from the FA Carling Premiership and Nationwide League is casting an envious glance in the direction of Jamaica, who have reached the World Cup finals for the first time. Messrs Hall, Simpson, Burton and Earle are now bound for France, having rediscovered their Jamaican roots, and perhaps Linvoy Primus, the Reading central defender, will be joining them. Primus is qualified on two counts: his mother was born on the Caribbean island and he once ate curried goat, rice and peas as a pre-match meal. "I tried it for a while but I'm back on the pasta now," he said.



long after the matches finish, and so has to be edited as the games are going on. Midlands clubs are asked to provide teamsheets, so that the editors can identify the players by their numbers, and most comply with haste. Not so Birmingham City when Norwich City visited St Andrew's. Central eventually received a teamsheet by fax — at 11.15am on Monday, accompanied by the note: "Sorry, bit late."

There, there Stan

Lord Taylor of Warwick, who last year became the first black Tory peer, apparently likens his newly-arrived son, Mark, to Stan Collymore, the Aston Villa striker. "He looks a bit like Stan," Lord Taylor, a Villa fanatic, said. Perhaps Stan resembles Mark, too — he sleeps a lot, whinges and needs constant attention. One day, just maybe, he will also grow up.

Extra special

Station Sports, a Sunday league side from Southampton, were locked at 2-2 against Connaught Arms in their Hampshire Junior A Cup second-round tie. Little could separate the sides until extra time, when Sports amassed ten goals without reply. "We scored twice in the first minute and didn't look back," Phil Jones, the

Sports manager, said "Everything seemed to go in, it was amazing."

Pet hates

It's a dog's life at Barnsley, too — at least for Eric Tinkler, the South African. "It's not the football that is getting to me," he said. "It's the fact that, due to the archaic quarantine laws in this country, I have to travel miles to visit my pet dog. This is going to go on for another five months. It's crazy." Tinkler added for good measure: "Don't get me wrong, Barnsley seems like a nice place and the people are great, too. It's just that the town seems so dead."

STRANGE BUT TRUE: Two Irish fans in Brussels last weekend, for Ireland's World Cup play-off against Belgium, were thrown out of the James Joyce bar — for singing.

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THE BIG IDEA

It's a crazy existence, but I'd like to be a manager one day

After the events of the past few weeks, I have been forced to ask myself why any footballer would want to be a manager. When one as well respected as Gerry Francis departs in the manner he did, it certainly begs the question.

The answer, of course, is that football is in the blood, and no matter how much pressure there is, players will always look to continue their career in the sport. There is something intoxicating about the people, the day-to-day contact and the "feel" of a club.

I don't think many players could define why they would want to face the strain of management, apart from the need to keep earning, of course, but there is definitely something addictive about the football business.

Of course, most players who go into coaching, believe that they will

never be faced with the pressures that forced Francis and David Platt into such terrible positions at Tottenham Hotspur and Sheffield Wednesday respectively. They have to believe that success will make their jobs impregnable — the sort of situation that Alex Ferguson has worked hard to achieve.

I would consider becoming a manager. Football is my life, and I know, even now, that I would find it attractive to stay in the game in any capacity. But I have to say that it becomes less attractive every year. These days, if you lose a few games, you are under pressure, and there is an intense concentration on a manager's every decision, every result.

Gerry Francis commanded great respect from the Tottenham players, and they are very sad to see him go. But he had a bit of a

bad run, and he is out on his ear. In the end, I think he had had enough. He was subjected to unfair pressures, considering the season is barely two months old, and many of his players were injured.

Even at Liverpool, our manager has had to endure all sorts of nonsense. Roy Evans has created a new team at Anfield, and it has taken time to bed all the new players in. We have had some poor results, true, but we have also played quite well in some games, and we are in a reasonable position in the FA Carling Premiership. The manager has the respect of his players, and yet plenty of people criticise him every time we have a reverse.

As I say, why bother? Still, even Gerry's sad exit has not put me off going into management one day — and I bet it hasn't put Gerry off.



either. He is a top-class coach and I'm sure he will quickly resurface. Just look at Ron Atkinson. He is back again at St. Paul's, and I'm certain he is loving every minute of it. Ron has no need to put up with some of the hassles he has faced, but he loves the game. It is that love that drives him on, just as it does so many football men.

Cap has its secrets. I KNOW that the Coca-Cola Cup has been the subject of much criticism recently, but our match against Grimsby Town offered a reasonable defence of the competition. People say it has little meaning, but try telling that to the Grimsby and Liverpool fans. Whenever a smaller team gets a crack at higher-placed opponents, there is plenty of excitement.

Liverpool have always taken the competition seriously. We have fielded our strongest side in every game, and we will continue to do that. The gaffer offered the lads who had been on England duty a rest on Tuesday, but none of us wanted it.

We will never cheer our fans. If we are put into a game then we will always go out to try to win. The

Coca-Cola Cup is one of the three main trophies in England, and there is still a Wembley final at stake. The fact that there is no place in Europe for the winner takes the edge off it a little, and it certainly explains why Manchester United are prepared to field some of their younger players in the competition.

The European Cup is obviously their main priority, and their policy is clearly paying dividends, because they have been tremendously successful this season. United are in a good position anyway, because even if they're strong players, they can field a very strong side.

There have been certain suggestions to help maintain interest in the Coca-Cola Cup, and ease the burden on English clubs in Europe. One attractive idea is to turn it into an under-21 competition to give younger players a chance at the top level, although that would weigh in favour of the big clubs, who have very strong pools.

My preference is for a shortened competition. The Scottish League Cup programme has been criticised for being over so early, but I think most clubs would appreciate it if we could play most of our matches by Christmas, and then have, say, the semi-final and final closer to the end of the season. It is fixture congestion later in the season that most are keen to avoid.

Hodde's different tactics. It wasn't the best performance by England last week, but I'm sure that the manager will have taken plenty out of it. Some critics don't seem to have completely understood what he was attempting against Cameroon.

Glenn Hodde played a slightly different formation for this game. He used Robbie Fowler on his own up front, with Paul Scholes and me as inside forwards behind him, ahead of a central midfield pairing of Paul Gascoigne and Paul Ince.

It was a slightly unfamiliar position for me, and I had to come to terms with a role alongside Scholes and Gascoigne. It may not have been an unqualified success, but with the World Cup finals still months away, the win was a bonus in the sense that it maintains the confidence within the squad. To do it with goals by Robbie and Scholes was a real bonus because Glenn was looking at individual things, not a finished picture.

It has been suggested in some quarters that I did not do my chances of going to the finals any good with my performance, but I don't think about England like that at all. It was a team effort against Cameroon, and the manager wasn't giving us a one-off trial.

His was a very different perspective. He wanted to see how we would cope with a new formation.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

(Last week's position in brackets)				HOME					AWAY					LAST 10 MATCHES W-D-L	CURRENT STATUS
PL	PTS	GD		W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
1. MANCHESTER UTD (1)	14	28	+21	6	1	0	23	4	2	3	2	8	6	5-3-2	L1
2. ARSENAL (2)	14	27	+15	5	2	0	18	3	2	4	1	12	12	5-4-1	W1
3. BLACKBURN ROVERS (3)	14	27	+13	4	2	1	16	9	3	4	0	10	4	4-5-1	W1
4. CHELSEA (4)	13	25	+13	4	0	1	10	6	4	1	3	19	10	6-1-3	W2
5. LEEDS UTD (7)	14	23	+4	3	1	3	10	10	4	1	2	10	6	6-1-3	W2
6. LIVERPOOL (8)	13	22	+12	5	0	1	18	5	1	4	2	7	8	6-2-2	W1
7. LEICESTER CITY (5)	14	22	+5	3	3	2	11	8	3	1	2	8	6	4-2-4	L1
8. DERBY COUNTY (6)	13	20	+6	4	2	0	14	4	2	0	5	11	15	5-2-3	L1
9. WIMBLEDON (10)	14	19	+1	2	2	4	8	9	3	2	1	8	6	5-2-3	W1
10. NEWCASTLE UTD (9)	11	18	-1	4	2	1	10	8	1	1	2	4	7	4-3-3	D3
11. COVENTRY CITY (12)	14	17	-4	2	6	0	10	8	1	2	3	2	8	2-6-2	D1
12. CRYSTAL PALACE (13)	13	16	-2	0	3	3	4	9	4	1	2	9	6	3-4-3	D1
13. SOUTHAMPTON (16)	14	16	-4	4	1	3	13	10	1	0	5	4	11	4-1-5	W3
14. WEST HAM UTD (11)	13	16	-4	4	0	1	10	4	1	1	6	7	17	3-1-6	L2
15. ASTON VILLA (14)	14	15	-7	2	1	3	6	11	2	2	4	7	9	4-3-3	D1
16. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (15)	14	13	-10	3	2	2	7	7	0	2	5	4	14	2-4-5	L3
17. EVERTON (17)	13	12	-6	3	1	3	11	11	0	2	4	4	10	2-3-5	L2
18. BOLTON WANDERERS (18)	13	12	-11	1	4	1	3	3	1	2	4	7	18	1-5-4	L1
19. SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (20)	14	12	-12	3	1	3	13	12	0	2	5	10	23	3-2-5	W1
20. BARNLEY (19)	14	10	-29	2	1	4	6	15	1	0	6	5	25	1-1-8	L1

WEEKEND MATCHES

TODAY									
Price of 3.0 tickets started at 10.00. Prices subject to change. Seats available. * denotes all-England. P denotes play-off. S denotes sold out.									
FA Carling Premiership									
(1) Aston Villa v Everton	(2) Blackburn v Chelsea	(3) Derby v Coventry	(4) Leicester v Bolton	(5) Liverpool v Southampton	(6) Newcastle v Arsenal	(7) Sheffield Wed v Man Utd	(8) Wimbledon v Man Utd		
Midweek League									
(9) Burnley v Sunderland	(10) Crewe v Stockport	(11) Man City v Bradford	(12) Northwich v Oxford Utd	(13) Nottingham Forest v Charlton	(14) Port Vale v Sheffield Utd	(15) Southend v Walsley	(16) QPR v Huddersfield	(17) Reading v Ipswich	(18) Swindon v Middlesbrough
(19) Tranmere v Stockport	(20) Walsley v Walsley	(21) Walsley v Walsley	(22) Walsley v Walsley	(23) Walsley v Walsley	(24) Walsley v Walsley	(25) Walsley v Walsley	(26) Walsley v Walsley	(27) Walsley v Walsley	(28) Walsley v Walsley
Second division									
(29) Blackpool v York	(30) Bournemouth v Carlisle	(31) Bristol City v Wycombe	(32) Bristol City v Wycombe	(33) Luton v Watford	(34) Luton v Watford	(35) Luton v Watford	(36) Luton v Watford	(37) Luton v Watford	(38) Luton v Watford
(39) Luton v Watford	(40) Luton v Watford	(41) Luton v Watford	(42) Luton v Watford	(43) Luton v Watford	(44) Luton v Watford	(45) Luton v Watford	(46) Luton v Watford	(47) Luton v Watford	(48) Luton v Watford
Third division									
(49) Luton v Watford	(50) Luton v Watford	(51) Luton v Watford	(52) Luton v Watford	(53) Luton v Watford	(54) Luton v Watford	(55) Luton v Watford	(56) Luton v Watford	(57) Luton v Watford	(58) Luton v Watford
(59) Luton v Watford	(60) Luton v Watford	(61) Luton v Watford	(62) Luton v Watford	(63) Luton v Watford	(64) Luton v Watford	(65) Luton v Watford	(66) Luton v Watford	(67) Luton v Watford	(68) Luton v Watford
Fourth division									
(69) Luton v Watford	(70) Luton v Watford	(71) Luton v Watford	(72) Luton v Watford	(73) Luton v Watford	(74) Luton v Watford	(75) Luton v Watford	(76) Luton v Watford	(77) Luton v Watford	(78) Luton v Watford
(79) Luton v Watford	(80) Luton v Watford	(81) Luton v Watford	(82) Luton v Watford	(83) Luton v Watford	(84) Luton v Watford	(85) Luton v Watford	(86) Luton v Watford	(87) Luton v Watford	(88) Luton v Watford
Fifth division									
(89) Luton v Watford	(90) Luton v Watford	(91) Luton v Watford	(92) Luton v Watford	(93) Luton v Watford	(94) Luton v Watford	(95) Luton v Watford	(96) Luton v Watford	(97) Luton v Watford	(98) Luton v Watford
(99) Luton v Watford	(100) Luton v Watford	(101) Luton v Watford	(102) Luton v Watford	(103) Luton v Watford	(104) Luton v Watford	(105) Luton v Watford	(106) Luton v Watford	(107) Luton v Watford	(108) Luton v Watford

ATTACK			SCORING TRENDS			SCORERS			LEADING PREMIERSHIP SCORERS									
Goals scored	Avg		Goals per half	1st	2nd	Goals			92-3	93-4	94-5	95-6	96-7	97-8	Total			
1. Chelsea	29	2.23	Arsenal	18	11	Bergkamp (Arsenal)	10		16	31	34	31	25	0	137			
2. Manchester Utd	31	2.21	Aston Villa	5	8	Sutton (Blackburn)	10		20	16	24	25	16	3	104			
3. Arsenal	30	2.14	Barnsley	6	5	Wright (Arsenal)	8		15	23	18	15	23	8	103			
4. Derby	25	1.92	Blackburn	10	7	R Fowler (Liverpool)	8		12	25	28	18	5	8	89			
5. Liverpool	25	1.92	Bolton	5	5	E Sheeringham (Man Utd)	7		21	14	15	7	7	7	63			
6. Blackburn	26	1.86	Chelsea	14	15	M Le Tissier (Southampton)	7		15	25	19	7	18	2	81			
7. Sheffield Wed	23	1.84	Coventry	6	6	A Cole (Man Utd)	7		15	18	12	14	11	-	70			
8. Leeds	20	1.43	Crystal Palace	7	6	G Carrington (Man Utd)	7		8	25	15	0	11	10	69			
9. Leicester	19	1.39	Sheff Wed	10	15	C Sutton (Blackburn)	7		15	22	8	15	5	2	67			
10. West Ham	17	1.31	Derby	5	10	C Armstrong (Tottenham)	6		19	17	7	10	5	1	59			
11. Newcastle	14	1.27	Everton	14	6	D Holdsworth (Bolton)	6		10	21	12	8	5	2	58			
12. Southampton	17	1.21	Leeds Utd	7	12	P Beardsley (Bolton)	6		15	11	8	8	8	4	54			
13. Everton	15	1.15	Liverpool	6	19	M Hughes (Chelsea)	5		12	16	13	10	0	0	51			
14. Wimbledon	16	1.14	Manchester Utd	16	15	A Collins (Leicester)	5		6	2	5	17	17	2	50			
15. Crystal Palace	13	1.00	Newcastle	8	6	D Yorke (Aston Villa)	5		-	-	22	14	12	1	45			
16. Aston Villa	13	0.93	Sheff Wed	11	12	S Collymore (Aston Villa)	4		1	1	13	14	13	7	49			
17. Coventry	12	0.86	Southampton	6	11	D Duffin (Coventry)	4		12	19	11	7	0	-	49			
18. Barnsley	11	0.79	Tottenham	4	13	M Bright (Charlton)	4		14	14	12	5	3	0	48			
19. Tottenham	11	0.77	West Ham	5	11	I Rush (Newcastle)	4		15	11	9	7	5	-	47			
20. Bolton	10	0.70	Wimbledon	5	11	B Deane (Sheff Wed)	4											

DEFENCE			CLEAN SHEETS			CAUTIONS			REFEREES			INTERNET		
Goals conceded	Avg		Clean sheet	Failed to score		Cards issued	Yellow	Red	Cards issued	P	Yellow	Red	FA Premiership clubs' official websites	
1. Manchester Utd	10	0.71	Arsenal	6	3	1. Leeds Utd	33	1	1. S Dunn	5	25	3	Arsenal	www.arsenal.co.uk
2. Blackburn	13	0.93	Aston Villa	4	3	2. Arsenal	31	1	2. G Willard	8	37	1	Aston Villa	www.astonvillafc.co.uk
3. Leicester	14	1.00	Barnsley	2	6	3. Bolton	28	3	3. P Durkin	8	37	2	Blackburn	www.blackburn.co.uk
4. Liverpool	13	1.00	Blackburn	2	6	4. Everton	28	2	4. M Reed	5	23	1	Bolton	www.boltonfc.co.uk
5. Arsenal	15	1.07	Bolton	4	5	5. C Palmer	28	1	5. G Ashby	7	30	1	Chelsea	www.chelseafc.co.uk
6. Wimbledon	15	1.07	Chelsea	5	5	6. West Ham	27	1	6. P Alcock	7	30	0	Coventry	www.coventryfc.co.uk
7. Coventry	16	1.14	Coventry	3	5	7. Coventry	24	3	7. J Winter	8	31	2	Derby	www.derbyfc.co.uk
8. Leeds	15	1.15	Crystal Palace	3	3	8. Chelsea	24	3	8. G Barber	7	27	1	Everton	www.evertonfc.co.uk
9. Crystal Palace	16	1.23	Derby	3	5	9. Blackburn	24	2	9. M Bodenham	7	28	0	Leeds	www.leedsfc.co.uk
10. Chelsea	15	1.36	Everton	4	6	10. Sheffield Wed	24	2	10. D Ellery	8	23	1	Liverpool	www.liverpoolfc.co.uk
11. Newcastle	20	1.43	Leeds Utd	4	6	11. Tottenham	24	0	11. U Rennie	9	29	3	Man Utd	www.manutd.co.uk
12. Aston Villa	19	1.46	Leicester	5	3	12. Derby	24	1	12. G Poll	7	20	1	Newcastle	www.newcastle.co.uk
13. Derby	21	1.50	Manchester Utd	4	3	13. Manchester Utd	23	0	13. M Riley	7	19	1	Sheff Wed	www.sheffwed.co.uk
14. Southampton	21	1.61	Newcastle	4	3	14. P Jones	23	0	14. P Jones	7	19	2	Southampton	www.soton.ac.uk/~saints
15. Tottenham	21	1.61	Sheff Wed	3	1	15. Liverpool	21	1	15. N Barry	7	21	0	Tottenham	www.tottenham.co.uk
16. Bolton	21	1.61	Southampton	3	6	16. Leicester	21	1	16. D Gallagher	8	20	2	West Ham	www.westham.co.uk
17. West Ham	35	2.50	Tottenham	1	3	17. Barnsley	17	1	17. A White	8	20	1	Wimbledon	www.wimbledon.co.uk
18. Sheffield Wed	35	2.50	West Ham	1	3	18. Newcastle	16	1	18. K Burge	7	18	0		
19. Barnsley	40	2.86	Wimbledon	2	4	19. Aston Villa	14	1	19. S Lodge	8	15	0		

COVERAGE

TELEVISION: BBC1: Today: Football Focus, from 12.20pm. Match of the Day (replay), from 10.50pm. Tomorrow: Match of the Day (replay), from 7.20pm. Sky Sports 1: Today: Sports Saturday Update, from 12 noon. Tomorrow: Goals on Sunday, from 11am. Premiership: Leeds Utd v West Ham United, from 3pm (repeated Sky Sports 3

Take a bow

lead on the first day. But he did not hit anybody, most of all the team-mates, would have played place that had played in past years. It was a Thursday night and that he was about to be played, and he was believed to be a British upper lip setter on this day.

Good golf was made increasingly more difficult than it had been in the first round. Then, however, had only a hope of being to hinder them. Now it was a rain and more rain. The rain from the late-afternoon downpours that rolled across the Northumbrian skyline through a gloomy, surly sort of a day.

By the time Archer led them through the turn, they led them

FINAL SCORES

Landscapes by seven shots, as that would have been smaller. And not just had a view from the hill.

It followed a more than one day's rain, and the best of the rain was better than the rain. It was a Thursday night and that he was about to be played, and he was believed to be a British upper lip setter on this day.

Good golf was made increasingly more difficult than it had been in the first round. Then, however, had only a hope of being to hinder them. Now it was a rain and more rain. The rain from the late-afternoon downpours that rolled across the Northumbrian skyline through a gloomy, surly sort of a day.

By the time Archer led them through the turn, they led them

BOXING

Lewis can't to challenge of Guerrier

Alan Lee charts a British duo's improbable quest for a world championship in the Network Q RAC Rally

McRae fired by driving ambition

Colin McRae prepared for his bid to regain the world rallying championship in the hair-raising manner that suits him best. Last weekend, while logic counselled caution and self-protection, he gave himself up to the intoxication of speed and hurled a moto-cross bike around a challenging course in Wales.

Sober sporting coaches, intent on the conventions of rest and well-being, would be horrified, but the psychologists might understand. To McRae, power and peril are not just an unavoidable part of the day job but his obsessive partners in life, his liberation.

He could, of course, have sat at home, in his apartment in Monte Carlo, and fretted about the improbable mission that awaits him when the Network Q RAC Rally begins in Cheltenham at dawn tomorrow. But that would not have been his style.

Relaxation comes on wheels or, by way of a change, on skis, on a raft or in a free-fall parachute. Take away speed and danger and you take the champion out of the man.

This, then, is a singular character in a singular sport.

Rallying creeps up on the British consciousness once a year. It is a sport about which a few know everything and the great majority know nothing at all, but, much is the clamour presently surrounding McRae, many more may boast a working knowledge come next Tuesday.

The position, for this daredevil yet taciturn Scot, is precarious. Despite winning the two most recent events in the world championship, McRae, 29, arrives at this final rally of the season needing not only a victory for himself but a finish outside the first six for Tommi Mäkinen, the Finn who leads the standings. If this was to occur, the pair would finish level on points and McRae, whose father, Jimmy, and brother, Alister, will be among those driving against him, would be champion on the tie-break of winning more rallies.

The odds are stacked in Mäkinen's favour but it is, nevertheless, the kind of duel that is the oxygen of any sport striving for its share of attention. The factor of McRae driving "at home" adds to the anticipation and Cheltenham, where the rally will now be staged for three years, is rubbing it in.

Ken Jennings, head of tourism in the town, estimates that



McRae test driving his Subaru in a rapid blur of colour. "He has the special talent to make the job seem easy," Colin Grist, his co-driver says. "You will never find him dripping in sweat."

actually laugh and joke a lot. There is the odd quick explosion between us, because we are only human, but we have not had a major row all season.

This is a still more remarkable rapport once it is appreciated that the pair have been in the odd scrape or two. "It is a fine line in this game and one small mistake can cost you everything. In Monte Carlo, we hit a patch of ice and wrapped the car round a tree. Then in Indonesia, where we had a comfortable lead, one little lapse put another tree in the way."

This week the pair have been on reconnaissance, driving each of the 26 stages at least once in a practice car. "First time round, Colin describes to me how he wants to drive it, how he sees the lines of a corner or the shape of a hill, and I take it down to my own shorthand," Grist said.

On the second practice run, Grist calls out the instructions

from a notebook that has expanded at the rate of a page to each kilometre. McRae responds and the pace-notes, as they are called, are fine-tuned. "That information is worth perhaps 25 per cent of our time," Grist said.

"Fitness is a very big thing for us. We have a personal trainer and we fly our road bikes around the world with us. We make time to train, even when it's tight. Usually, we'll cycle about 150 miles in the build-up to an event."

Grist, however, cycles for fitness rather than thrills. "Maybe I am the sensible one. Rallying is the ball-and-rod-all to me and I don't have such a need to drive my mountain bike downhill as fast as it will go." That, however, is the compulsion that sets McRae apart and may yet bring the world championship back to Britain.

Rally views, page 49

NETWORK Q RALLY

If Colin McRae is to take his second world championship he must win the rally while Mäkinen fails to finish in the first six.

DRIVERS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Driver	Points
Tommi Mäkinen	62
Colin McRae	52
Carlos Sainz	47
Wendell Elderton	34
Piero Liatti	23
Juha Kankkunen	22
Mikko Hirvonen	18

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Driver	Points
Subaru 3.04pts	62
Mitsubishi 3.04pts	52
Ford 3.04pts	47
Subaru 3.04pts	34
Mitsubishi 3.04pts	23
Ford 3.04pts	22
Mitsubishi 3.04pts	18

STAGE KEY

SUNDAY: LEG 1
MONDAY: LEG 2
TUESDAY: LEG 3
Stage

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND'S FIXTURES

Today

RUGBY UNION

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Lloyds and TSB International match

England v New Zealand

(at Old Trafford, 2.0)

International matches

Scotland v Australia

(at Murrayfield)

France v South Africa

(at Parc des Princes, 2.45)

Championship & Gloucester Cup

Group A

Fylde v Wakefield (12.30)

Group B

London Irish v Ospreys (2.30)

Rotherham v Ealing (2.15)

Group C

Bristol v Coventry (12.15)

Moseley v Worcester (12.0)

Group D

London Scottish v Cambridge Univ (12.0)

Jewson League

First division

Harrowgate v Oley (2.16)

Leeds v Rugby (2.15)

London Welsh v Newbury (2.15)

Morley v Lichfield (2.15)

Northampton v Loughborough (2.30)

Reading v Worcester (2.30)

Wharfedale v Rotherham (2.15)

Second division north

Huddersley v Manchester (2.30)

Lichfield v Kidderminster (2.30)

Nuneaton v Birmingham (2.30)

Salford v Wigan (2.15)

Sheff Wed v Sheffield Hallam (2.30)

Warrington v Preston (2.30)

Second division south

Cheltenham v Exeter (2.30)

Esher v Havant (2.30)

Harley v Canterbury (2.0)

Maidenhead v Bath (2.30)

Plymouth v Basingstoke (2.30)

Redruth v North Wales (2.30)

Worcester v Bath (2.30)

North-west division

Tynedale v Darlington (2.30)

Wigan v Wigan (2.30)

Welsh League

First division

Aberystwyth v Llanelli (2.0)

Aberystwyth v Pontypool (2.0)

Brynmawr v South Wales Police (2.0)

Cross Keys v Caerphilly (2.0)

Mossley v Duffryn (2.0)

Merthyr v Rhydyfelin (2.0)

Tredegar v Newport (2.0)

SWALEC CUP: Third round

Aberystwyth v Llanelli (2.0)

Aberystwyth v Pontypool (2.0)

Brynmawr v South Wales Police (2.0)

Cross Keys v Caerphilly (2.0)

Mossley v Duffryn (2.0)

Merthyr v Rhydyfelin (2.0)

Tredegar v Newport (2.0)

WELSH CUP: Third round

Aberystwyth v Llanelli (2.0)

Aberystwyth v Pontypool (2.0)

Brynmawr v South Wales Police (2.0)

Cross Keys v Caerphilly (2.0)

Mossley v Duffryn (2.0)

Merthyr v Rhydyfelin (2.0)

Tredegar v Newport (2.0)

Other

QPR v Arsenal (2.30)

Sheff Wed v Sheffield Hallam (2.30)

Warrington v Preston (2.30)

FOOTBALL

QPR v Arsenal (2.30)

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1800, 2.0i, 2.0i, 2.0i, 2.0i, 2.0i
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This
Could Rel...



Is this really a new Norton?

Page 47



Why the bus can't compete any more

Page 47



Rewing up for the RAC Rally

Page 49

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 22 1997

This road cure is going to hurt

Everyone agrees the Government must do something about traffic — but not to them, says Alan Copps

The first target has already been singled out: stand by for more howls of protest from that much-pollarded creature, the company car driver. When the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, stands up on Tuesday to deliver his pre-Budget statement in the Commons, his words will be keenly examined by everyone in the transport business.

Ministers and officials have indicated this week that stiffer taxes on company cars are likely to be balanced by tax breaks for those whose employers pay for season tickets.

But before the much-heralded integrated transport policy designed to tackle congestion and pollution takes shape, the Government has a mountain of paperwork to climb — the 4,000 replies to its consultation document on transport issued in August. These, it has promised, will play a major part in shaping the White Paper on transport to be published next spring.

That we rely too heavily on the car is not in dispute, even the motor manufacturers accept that. The figures on the right show how dramatically our patterns of travel have shifted in the past 35 years. But a glance at some of those replies serves only to emphasise what a mass of conflicting interests and historic misconceptions any new policy has to resolve.

For example, the company car driver might seem a popular target for increased taxation, but the Retail Motor Industry Federation points out that the number of company cars, according to the tax definition, has already fallen from 1.95 million to 1.65 million in the past five years. It estimates that of the 25.5 million cars on Britain's roads only 5.35 million are used regularly for business.

Since company cars now account for more than 50 per cent of all new car sales, those cars most prominently in the line of tax-

ation's fire are the newest, and therefore the cleanest on the roads. Private motorists going to and from work, school, the shops or just for a drive are likely to cause greater pollution.

Only one thing is going to get those drivers out of their cars: a drastic improvement in public transport. That is the one point of agreement in almost every response.

Railtrack, which perhaps stands to gain more than anyone else from such a change, says it could double services within 15 years if the demand were there. But demand will only grow, it says, if road users are made to pay the "true social costs" of their journeys. According to its calculation road users pay only 28 per cent of the true cost of any journey at the time they make it (the petrol bill, rather than road maintenance, depreciation, servicing, etc). So a great deal of its response spells out how road users might be taxed to make them more aware of this.

Meanwhile, the motor industry is demanding to know what happens to the £26 billion taxes already paid annually by motorists. Even if not spent on roads, it should be spent on transport, says RMI chief executive, Christopher Macgowan.

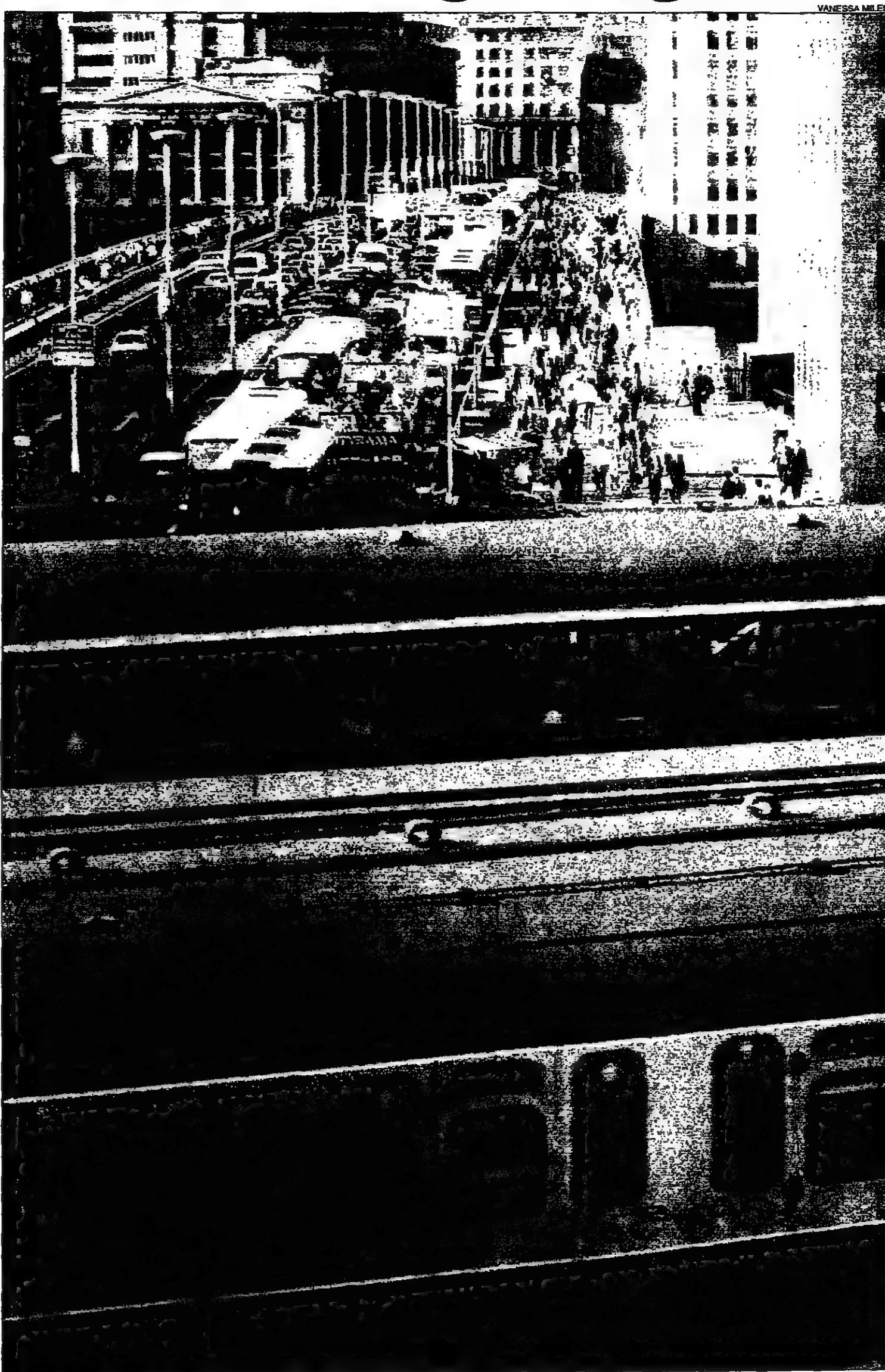
Almost everyone who responded to the consultation wants some sort of subsidy for their own interest. The Government has taken one small practical step by starting to convert its own fleet of 175 ministerial cars to run on natural gas. The Energy Saving Trust, which, through the Powershift initiative, is responsible for encouraging clean alternative fuels, applauds this. At last month's motor show it organised an impressive array of gas and electric-powered vehicles.

But it, too, says tax breaks are essential if others are to follow the Government's example. In particular it says the image of the bus must be cleaned up. Operators are currently reluctant to change to cleaner fuels because they get a rebate on the duty they pay on conventional fuels.

Powershift admits that alternative fuels can only be part of the answer, but says that since a massive switch away from road transport is unlikely, it is vital to educate the public about which fuels are cleaner than petrol or diesel and to make them more widely available.

While most responses focus on city traffic, there are several good ideas for rural areas, such as one from the Council for the Protection of Rural England for walkers, cyclists and horse riders to be given priority over motorised traffic on certain lanes.

Of the alternative means of transport, the RMI makes a good case for motorcycles, in particular scooters and mopeds, to reduce congestion and pollution, especially in cities. But the provision of secure parking at stations and workplaces for these vehicles is essential, it says. The Government, however, is already considering taxing parking places at work.

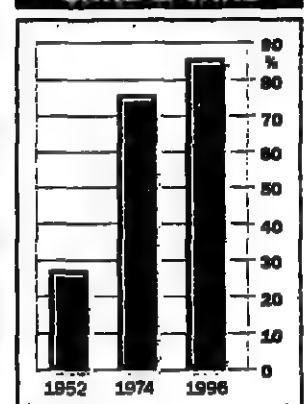


Railroaded by policy: train operators say they could double their services if new taxes were tough enough to force drivers out of cars

Rise of king car

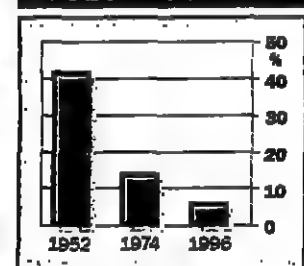
IN 1952 Britons travelled 219 billion kilometres (136.5 billion miles) in the UK, more than 60 per cent of them on public transport. Last year we travelled more than three times as far; 86 per cent by car. All other forms of domestic transport (except for air) have declined dramatically. The graphs show the percentage of all travel accounted for by various modes of transport.

CARS & VANS



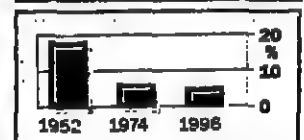
THE PROPORTION of travel in private cars more than doubled from 1952 to 1996. It has grown steadily at 1.2 per cent a year since. The total distance of all road journeys has increased by more than 150 per cent.

BUSES & COACHES



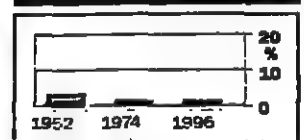
BUSES declined quickly after the war. Bus travel was halved to 21 per cent between 1952 and 1964. Since then, regardless of reorganisations and privatisation the decline has been absolutely steady.

RAIL



The distance travelled by Britons on the railways has remained remarkably steady, between 35 and 40 billion kilometres per year. But the train's share of travel has declined from 18 per cent to just 5 per cent.

MOTORCYCLES



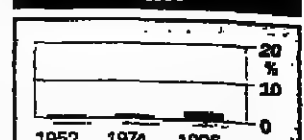
MOTORCYCLE use reached a peak of 4 per cent from 1957-1961 but then fell sharply to 1 per cent by 1968. The early 1980s saw a resurgence followed by another fall. Current trends suggest another rise.

PEDALCYCLES



NOTHING matches the fall of pedal power. In 1952 it accounted for more than 10 per cent of all our travel. By 1968 the figure was 1 per cent and despite booming cycle sales it remains at that level.

AIR



WE FLY much more now than we did in 1952 — a total of 6.3 billion kilometres last year against just 2 million in the 1950s. But as a proportion of our domestic people-moving, it remains negligible.

Could Reliants be the answer? Ask the American Embassy



Hot to Trotter: Mike Gilbert bought Del Boy's car from the television series. Only Fools and Horses

Only fools want lots of horsepower, it seems, when driving in Britain's capital. So the American embassy has taken a leaf out of Del Boy's book and bought three Reliant Robins.

With next week's draft budget likely to point the way towards reducing the size of cars clogging Britain's roads, the embassy could find itself among the trendsetters. It is so pleased with the three-wheelers that it has just bought two newer models.

"They are economical, manoeuvrable and good for running about town," says an embassy spokesman. The Americans' Robins are used to ferry maintenance crews to repair embassy houses and to carry general supplies, the spokesman adds.

For Americans used to cheap petrol, the Robin offers a special relationship with comparatively expensive British garage forecourts. The embassy's Robin Giant Pick-Up and the Super Van get between 50 and 72 miles to the gallon. The Super Vans cost just £5,140 each and road tax is £60 a year instead of

Eve-Ann Prentice on three-wheeling

£150 for more conventional vehicles.

The manoeuvrability and low running costs may prove even more apposite after next Tuesday's announcements. The Government has already said it plans to reduce the number of parking places in London, sharply increase parking fees and cut the number of residents' parking permits. The scheme, revealed by Transport Minister Glenda Jackson last month, has brought warnings from the RAC that some areas of London could be killed off if people are prevented from driving to them.

Westminster Council, meanwhile, is to introduce Britain's highest parking meter fees in parts of the borough next year. The increase, from £2.40 to £3 an hour, will be accompanied by increases in parking ticket fines, from £60 to £80 in the West End. So a Trotter-style, three-wheeler-dealer van can reach

parking places that a stretch-limo could only dream of.

Jonathan Heynes, who worked his way up from the shop floor at Jaguar to senior management, liked Reliant Robins so much that he bought the factory in Tamworth, Staffordshire in January, 1996. "Clearly the American embassy thinks it is a unique vehicle and that gives us a tremendous edge to go to other embassies and seek commissions," he says. The company is now on a high with 250 Robins, worth £500,000, on order. "We have improved quality very much and there is confidence in the new company," says Heynes. "The cars have a revised cooling system, better instrumentation, interior trim and engine quality."

The forebears to the Trotters' trusty Reliant van were first produced by Tom Lawrence Williams in the garden of his home in Tamworth in 1934. The first passenger car, the Regal, was made in 1953 and boasted a revolutionary (literally) steering wheel instead of a handlebar, and managed a top speed of 60mph.

go

Labour's road policy has just missed the bus

mendacity was attached to the introduction of bus lanes. We were told they would ensure that public transport flowed like a river. The reality is different. Part of the reason bus lanes were needed was to cover up the disastrous consequences of abolishing bus conductors.

Road pricing would only get car drivers on to the railways if, for example, the 310-mile London-Cardiff return journey by road is

Drivers who first received a licence after January 1, 1997 will be able to drive a minibus for a non-commercial organisation. Fact sheets INF28 and INF40 are available from the DVLA, telephone 01792 792 792.



Bike is European rather than thoroughbred British. Frame is made in England, however

**Norton returns
(but it's German)**

Norton returns (but it's German)

Joe Siefert, the German businessman behind the bike, was unrepentant. He now owns the rights to the Norton name in continental Europe and is proud of his motor-

In the meantime, however, Siefert decided to make his own *metamorphosis* to celebrate Norton's

Peter Cocks, chairman of the 1,000-strong Norton Owners Club, said: "Slapping a Rotax engine in a frame is not going to recreate the flavour of a Norton."

But Siefert says his machine is a labour of love: "I'm not really doing it as a commercial enterprise," he adds, "but to build a Norton that handles well, is light weight and good on country roads. I plan to build 100 next year and will just about break even on the project."

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Over-optimistic house prices are beginning to meet some resistance, says Sara McConnell

Buyers take the upper hand

This year will be remembered by many buyers as the one when they tried to buy a house and failed. Not because they could not afford it but because there was nothing they wanted to buy.

As the housing market recovery gathered pace at the start of the year, frantic housebuyers, particularly in London and the South East, fought over homes. Contracts were exchanged in days or even hours rather than weeks. Rising prices, fuelled mainly by lack of supply, persuaded many potential sellers to hold back in the hope of a higher price. Those sellers who did come forward then began to gazump buyers.

Amid angry calls for an anti-gazumping law, the Government promised an overhaul of the whole housebuying process in September. Its report next February is expected to be highly critical of the current slow and inefficient system. Only now, as the year ends, are buyers starting to set the pace.

Prospective buyers, particularly in London, are jibbing at over-optimistic asking prices as they feel the pinch of rising interest rates, say housing analysts and agents. At the same time, more sellers are putting their homes on the market, easing the shortage of property which has been mainly responsible for pushing up prices. Matthew Ryall, economist at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, says: "It's turning into a buyer's market and there should be more property coming on in 1998".

In its latest quarterly review of the housing market, the Nationwide Building Society says there have been "anecdotal reports of buyer resistance" to higher prices. Buyers can now afford to be choosier and are under less pressure to exchange quickly, partly because there is more choice of property and partly because there is less competition from other buyers.

Richard Woolf, of Winkworth, the London estate agent, said: "For the first time in many years we are seeing a greater equilibrium between supply and demand. Although the market remains



The W6 bargain that rose £70,000 in six months

Kate Arthur snapped up what she now realises was a bargain in March this year when she exchanged contracts on a three-bedroom house in southwest London. She had an inkling that prices were rising sharply in Fulham when her two-bedroom flat, bought in 1989 for £116,000, was valued at £165-£170,000 last December (Sara McConnell writes).

"I thought we would get about £145,000" said Ms Arthur, who works for an estate agency but who, like most of her colleagues, was taken by surprise by the strong market

buoyant and some record prices have been achieved, buyers are generally more thoughtful about their purchases and more sensitive to overpricing.

Such sentiments mark a sea-change in the housing market since the beginning of 1997. After six years in the doldrums, prices started to rise at the end of last year, forcing analysts such as the Halifax to review their predictions for 1997 upward from 7 per cent to 8 per

cent. Estate agents were caught by surprise and rapidly sold any decent property on their books. Jeremy Duncan, of Raffleys Buckland, in High Wycombe said: "It was as if someone had pulled a switch. Everything took off between November and December".

Sharply rising prices in London captured headlines over the next few months, fuelled by demand from overseas buyers and cash buyers clutching hundreds of thou-

sands of pounds in City bonuses. Buyers who could not afford the choicest areas moved further out causing "ripple effects" in unlikely areas such as Tooting and Hackney. In Battersea, the price of a one bedroom flat rose 30 per cent in three months while the price of a four-bedroom house rose 70 per cent in three years, said Winkworth. More sellers started to flex their muscles by gazumping buyers and accepting higher offers,

a practice which revived unwelcome memories of the late 1980s.

The general election in May registered scarcely a blip, as the market powered on. Gordon Brown's first Budget in July generating rumours about the abolition of mortgage interest tax relief and rises in stamp duty brought a rush of activity the weekend before as people tried to exchange contracts to avoid higher taxes.

But critics sceptical of press

claims of a housing boom pointed out that the number of transactions was still well down on levels in the late 1980s and that rises were being pushed upwards almost solely because of a shortage of property, rather than because more people were buying. According to the Halifax, 1.3 million homes have so far changed hands this year, well down on the 1.6 million expected in a normal year. At the peak of the 1988 boom, 2.2 million transactions were recorded.

Competition between buyers also focused almost exclusively on prime properties, particularly family homes. Studios, one-bedroom flats and shoddy 1980s conversions languished unsold while the first-time buyers, who once would have bought them, were able to leapfrog to larger flats on the back of some of the cheapest mortgage money since the mid 1960s. In High Wycombe, young families are looking for three-bedroom semi-detached houses selling for between £80,000 and £100,000, said Mr Duncan.

Only in the latter part of the year are there signs that first time buyers are turning back to flats as the cost of mortgage money rises. During this year the average percentage of net income first-time buyers spent on mortgage repayments has crept up from 30 per cent to 35 per cent. Growing numbers of buyers investing in property to rent has also improved the market for flats, say agents.

The recovery outside London was, and still is, patchy. Some areas including the South East, the South West, East Anglia and the West Midlands have seen some of the best growth, said Mr Ryall. By contrast, the North West and North East and Wales have seen prices remain relatively static. Nationwide reported underlying rises of just 1.3 per cent in Wales in the third quarter of last year compared with 5.3 per cent in Greater London. Between the third quarter of 1996 and the third quarter of 1997, house prices across the UK rose by 12 per cent, while in Greater London the rise was 30 per cent.

Prices may surge 11% next year

Next year could see house prices across the country rise up to 11 per cent on average as the cost of borrowing falls and more sellers put their homes on the market, some housing analysts said this week. But others were more cautious, suggesting rises of only 5-7 per cent.

Ed Stanfield, UK economist at SBC Warburg, feels prices will end the year 9.5 per cent up on the end of 1996 and finish 1998 11 per cent up on this year. He said: "We expect prices to carry on rising. They still have some way to get back to mid-1980s levels". Almost for the first time since the market began to turn, regions outside London and the South East will start to see higher prices, he said.

Rising prices will continue to free more people from the negative equity trap, fuelling more activity. Mr Stanfield thinks mortgage rates will fall sharply in the second half of next year, encouraging more buyers into the market. There have been five interest rate rises this year since the general election in May, pushing average mortgage rates up 1.5 per cent. By next summer, they could be 1 per cent lower.

The Nationwide is also optimistic about next year, saying: "confidence remains high, reflecting a strong employment market and solid growth in incomes." But it believes prices could rise just 7 per cent over 1998, against a 12 per cent third quarter year on year rise. It says buyer resistance will choke off some of the excesses of the London market, where some areas have seen 40 per cent rises.

Halifax is more cautious, forecasting prices will rise by no more than 6 per cent over 1998 after ending this year 6 per cent up on last year.

SARA MCCONNELL

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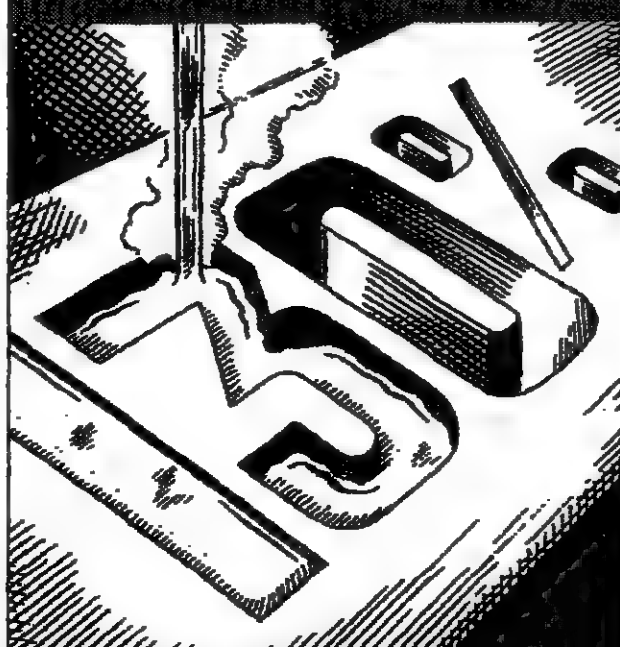
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Stakeholder delay is unforgiveable

Our highly imperfect pension system cannot be reformed overnight. But the delay in announcing firm proposals for the stakeholder pension is beginning to suggest more than just a desire for proper deliberation.

This week ministers called for more consultation on the stakeholder pension, supposedly the central plank of the Government's pension policy. Since anyone involved in pensions has already made lengthy submissions on this subject, it seems strange that we are not closer to a set of rules. We are told that stakeholder pensions will possess every fiscal virtue, being low-cost, flexible and secure, but we still have no idea of exactly how they will improve the retirement lot of the millions of workers not covered by company schemes (see page 64).

The reason why the Government is keeping us in suspense would seem



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

to be its sensitivity on two issues: compulsion and Serps. There is widespread support for obliging workers to contribute a certain percentage of their income to stakeholder pensions, so ensuring a reasonable retirement income. But John Denham, Pensions Minister, merely called for more debate on compulsion.

Presumably he is reluctant to reveal that a contribution of 10 per cent of earnings is seen as a desirable figure. Obviously he fears the cries of "backdoor taxation" that would arise

at such a suggestion. Maybe he is also wary about announcing a bonanza for his pin-striped pals. Compulsion could mean an extra £10 billion a year for the City to manage, a lucrative side-effect.

Stakeholder pensions should logically spell the end of Serps, the additional state scheme for those in jobs without pensions, a Seventies relic with no retro appeal. Here again, Mr Denham preferred not to be specific. But millions currently rely on Serps. Their benefits have

already been twice decreased. If the scheme were discontinued, what future protection would they enjoy?

Ministers should not be afraid of the awkward fact about pensions: a decent existence at 70 requires some sacrifice of lifestyle at 40.

Cold from the fridge

Private-client brokers are whining about the new Sets trading system. They say that its morning sickness puts investors at a disadvantage, making the spread, the difference between the buying and selling prices of shares, unacceptably wide (see page 63). Their complaints are justified. But the fluster at some firms arises not so much from concern for their clients but from unwillingness to take on the extra risk to themselves that the system involves. While this continues, ask about the spread before you deal.

Under fire and uncovered

Susan Emmett on a loophole that allows insurers to avoid a payout in cases like the Luxor massacre

Thousands of tourists evacuated from Egypt this week will not be able to claim on their travel insurance policies for having their holiday cut short. The massacre at Luxor has exposed a loophole in travel insurance policies. As the tragedy was an act of terrorism, holidaymakers flown back this week will not be able to claim under curtailment or cancellation.

Holidaymakers not only lose the money spent on pre-paid accommodation but any other part of the tour. Even if the tour operator arranges flights home, policyholders are not refunded the cost of insurance — usually around £25 to £30 for adults for a fortnight in Europe.

Most travel insurance policies have a clause excluding claims arising from "war, invasion, act of foreign enemy, hostilities, civil war, rebellion, revolution, insurrection or military or usurped power".

Home & Overseas, the insurer that provides cover for the customers of Thomas Cook and Thomson, is sticking firmly to this clause. Insurance companies are only likely to

make an exception for claims for personal accident and medical emergencies.

Vic Rance of the Association of British Insurers said: "Most insurance companies have a clause excluding terrorism. Having said that, if somebody was injured in this attack insurers will be more helpful and pay for the medical treatment but are unlikely to pay for curtailment."

Unless the Foreign Office specifies that a country must be avoided, insurance companies are free to cover travellers. So far the Foreign Office has only "strongly advised" avoiding Luxor.

Tourists who do not return on the emergency flights will have to make their own arrangements and as insurance policies are unlikely to cover these costs, they will have to foot the bill themselves.

Only one major travel insurer, WorldCover Direct, does not include a "terrorism clause" and gives full cover in

the event of terrorism, including cancellation and curtailment. The company scrapped the clause last year after a series of Basque terrorist bombings in Spain.

Jonathan Biles, managing director of WorldCover Direct, said: "We see terrorism as a normal part of the risks associated with travelling around the world and you have to take it into consideration. These attacks are a terrible thing to happen to our customers and it is not fair to just leave them out there. Statistically it does not happen that often."

None of the company's 15 customers visiting Egypt has decided to return on the special flights and the insurers will have to pay for their full accommodation and flight back. So far it has been estimated that this will cost the company at least £10,000.

However, some insurers are making an exception in this case and waiving the clause. Columbus Travel Insurance

has found a way of working around the wording and will pay out for curtailment of holiday. The company will continue to provide full cover for holidaymakers who remained in Egypt but those now buying travel insurance will not be covered for curtailment or cancellation.

Julie Philpott, marketing director at Columbus, said: "Whenever anything like this has happened before, we have worked around the terms of the policy. In circumstances like these it is responsible to look after our customers."

Major tour operators have also made an exception and have not only arranged flights back but refunded some of the cost of the holiday. Thomson, Britain's biggest tour operator, brought back 1,346 customers this week and cancelled operations for the rest of the month. Holidaymakers will be refunded some of their costs depending how long they had been in Egypt.

First Choice, the tour operator used by three of the murdered Britons, brought back 115 customers. It will not be paying compensation but will refund holidaymakers pro-rata for the days lost. However, Airtrans greeted its 351 customers in the airport with vouchers towards a holiday within 12 months.



The Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Luxor where 58 tourists were massacred this week

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Sainsbury's Bank	Instant Access	6.50%	6.50%	6.50%	6.50%	6.50%
Direct Line	Instant Savings	5.55%	6.65%	6.75%	6.80%	7.00%
Woolwich	Postal 60	6.50%	6.90%	7.10%	7.30%	7.50%

Source: Moneyfacts. Bonus Postal Account rates quoted gross C.A.R. and include a unique 2% gross C.A.R. bonus. All other rates quoted gross p.a. All rates correct as at 19.11.97.

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How to keep inflation on your side

John Givens weighs up the enemy, takes evasive action, and listens to the forecasts of the experts

Although inflation as a headline grabber has taken a low profile in recent years, it is still out there, a fact illustrated by government figures released last week that showed retail prices were up by 3.7 per cent in the year to October 31. It was the highest inflation rate for two years and up slightly from the 3.6 per cent in the 12 months to September 30.

The figures were only marginally worse than economists expected, but they were enough to change predictions for the foreseeable future of bank base rates. City experts now say that rates will be between 7.75 and 8 per cent by next summer, compared with the current 7.25 per cent.

THE BAD NEWS

Inflation is calculated through the retail prices index, which is a basket of around 650 everyday goods which you might be expected to buy on a regular basis.

However, the major impact for most people in an inflationary economy is a rise in mortgage interest rates. The Bank of England tries to dampen consumer

spending by raising interest rates, making it more expensive to borrow money.

For most people, the biggest single monthly bill they have to meet is to cover the cost of their home loan. When the Bank of England decides it must increase interest rates to cool the economy down, mortgage payers are likely to suffer.

With every 1 per cent rise in the mortgage rate costing a homeowner with a £60,000 interest-only mortgage an extra £46 a month, people trying hard to pay for a roof over their heads soon start feeling the effects of anti-inflationary government policy.

It is not only homeowners who pay. Financial institutions peg the rate at which they charge customers for borrowing money to the Bank of England base rate, so whether it is a large blue-chip company needing millions of pounds to finance a project, or a building society customer taking out a modest loan to buy a car,

rising inflation almost certainly means the cost of borrowing rises.

THE GOOD NEWS

Every cloud has a silver lining and if you have paid off your mortgage and other loans and have money sitting in bank and building society deposit accounts, then inflation is good news.

Financial institutions need to strike a balance on the interest rates they charge for loans and pay on savings. When the cost of borrowing increases, because inflation has forced bank base rates up, then the interest you earn on savings should also increase.

HOW TO REACT

When inflation is relatively low, which despite recent rises is still the case in the UK today, it is important to look closely at your investments. Unless the rate of return is well above market averages, the chances are that rising

prices are reducing the value of your savings.

According to Roddy Kohn of Kohn Cougar, the Bristol investment adviser, people with money sitting in low interest deposit accounts need to rethink their strategy. He said: "Bank and building society deposit accounts are offering low interest rates at the moment, which means that many people are seeing the value of their funds being devalued almost on a daily basis."

"This is particularly true of retired people who rely on income from savings to live on, because if their capital remains the same, in real terms its spending power is falling as inflation rises."

Mr Kohn believes the official government inflation figures can mislead the public, who instead should be looking at the effects of "real" inflation. He said: "The retail prices index is an average of the price movements of a basket of goods containing hundreds of items, but if you are spending the

majority of your income on the 20 per cent of these items which have shown the biggest price rises, then the real effect on the pound in your pocket is very different."

"For example, a litre of petrol has gone up by between 10 and 15 per cent since the election, well above the official rate of inflation, and the same could be said of cigarettes."

He believes that to protect the value of investments, funds need to be placed into equities and index-linked products like National Savings Certificates.

"Investors should always look to have a balanced portfolio of equities, gilts and cash and buying into index-linked investments at least gives you a chance of your funds keeping ahead of inflation."

The current tranche of Index-linked National Savings Certificates pays tax-free income of 2.5 per cent, plus the prevailing underlying rate of inflation. You must keep them for five years or face redemption penalties. Like-

wise, you can buy index-linked gilts — government-backed securities, which give an income and return your capital at a predetermined date in the future.

DON'T PANIC

The Bank of England's method of calculating inflation is often considered controversial because one of the two main indexes includes mortgage interest costs and another excludes them.

The index that shows price rises, including mortgages, is known as the headline rate of inflation and the figure which ignores home loans the underlying rate.

To get an idea of how mortgage rates impact on inflation, the headline rate announced on Wednesday of 3.7 per cent is almost a full 1 per cent higher than the underlying rate of 2.8 per cent. The difference can confuse, Roger Boote, chief economist of the HSBC Group and author of *The*

Death of Inflation, argues that including mortgage interest payments in the inflation indexes is wrong. He said: "Mortgage payments might be the biggest monthly commitment for many people, but for many others it is not, especially those who are retired and have paid off their mortgage and have savings on deposit."

"The headline rate of inflation does not accurately reflect how prices are performing in the shops and the underlying rate gives a much truer measure of what is going on."

THE OUTLOOK

Mr Boote believes the recent rise in inflation is part of a short-term trend which will reverse itself in the next year. "I expect the headline rate of inflation to rise from the current level of 3.7 per cent to around 4 per cent by the spring of 1998 before falling to 2.5 per cent by the end of the year, and the underlying rate to stay much the same until next spring before falling to around 2.25 per cent by the beginning of 1999."

When mother is gone

Caroline Merrell
on investments
for children where
the heart of the
family is missing

With Christmas only a month away, the time might be right to consider putting some money aside for children, even if they belong to someone else.

Louise Bartock, of Bourne-mouth, whose friend Lisa Baldock died leaving three children, aged five, seven and ten, wants to invest £1,000 for each child. The money will be paid to each at age 18.

Financial advisers give warning against setting up a trust for the children, pointing out that costs of forming such a vehicle can outweigh the advantages. Under trust arrangements, the person giving the money can keep control over where it ends up. Chris Wicks, of Kidson Imprey Scott Lang, the financial adviser, said: "A trust means that you can alter who you want to give the money to, if one of the children suddenly becomes obnoxious, or if one of them dies."

He says that forming a trust could cost £250, a big slice of the gift. Instead, Mr Wicks and other advisers recommend National Savings as one low-risk way to give children money.

National Savings offers a five-year fixed-rate Children's Bond currently paying 6.75 per cent interest tax-free. Advisers say that the only risk is that interest rates rise above the 6.75 per cent fix. The maximum that can be invested in the bond is £1,000. Economists believe that interest rates may go a little higher, which could disadvantage those locked into this product. After five years, the money could be invested in another set of savings bonds.



Investment of £1,000 and 7.25 per cent fixed interest, paid tax free upon maturity.

Because the children are 13, 11 and eight years from majority, advisers say it is possible to take a little more risk with the money. On the whole, unit trusts are the investment vehicle favoured, although Mr Wicks would consider a ten-year savings plan with Tunbridge Well Equitable Friendly Society, pointing out that the eldest child would have to wait until age 20 before it matured.

Friendly societies' savings plans benefit from tax relief on the investment, and, because policies are for ten years, the lump sum at maturity is also

tax free. Mr Wicks says buyers should study the charges.

Amanda Davidson, of Holden Meehan, the adviser, recommends unit trusts. These invest in a range of shares. She says the duration of the investment permits more risk. "I would put 50 per cent of the money in the UK, with the rest in an international fund," she said.

Dani Glover, an adviser with Fiona Price & Partners, sees ethical investments as an option. These avoid investing in companies linked to gambling, tobacco or arms. She points to Family Assurance's United Charities Ethical fund. She says that one advantage of this fund, which has a 6 per

cent initial charge and a 1.1 per cent annual charge, is that it comes packaged with a "bare trust" — a trust under which the children could be named as beneficiaries. The trust is no extra cost.

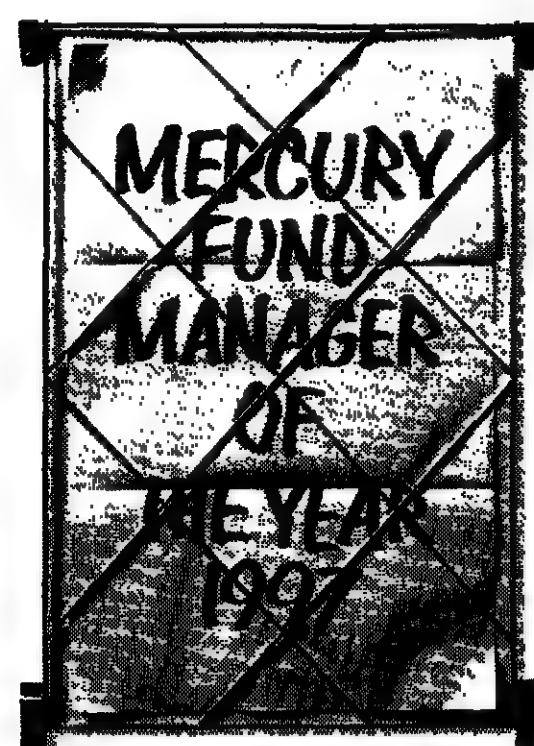
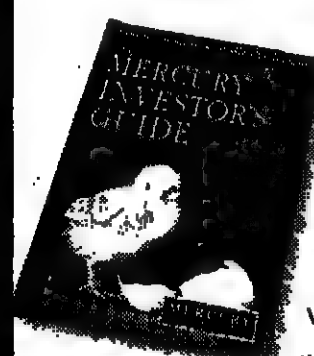
Mr Wicks recommends internationally diversified trusts. These may be volatile, but, over long periods, can outperform other investments. "I recommend international funds from Guinness Flight, Fidelity and Mercury," he said. Although children cannot hold the trusts, they can be nominated by their benefactor. So, any income drawn is tax free.

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Patrick Collinson finds contrasting views over a fund's strategy

Is small going to be beautiful again?

As millions of Spaniards switch on the country's equivalent of Match of the Day on Saturday night, the phones start buzzing at Telepizza, a home delivery pizza chain. Pizza is the new passion for Spaniards in Europe's fastest-growing fast-food market.

Telepizza's phenomenal growth from one Madrid take-away in 1989 to nearly 300 today has seen it overtake Pizza Hut and Burger King and challenge McDonald's for market dominance in Spain.

Guinness Flight, the London investment manager, picks Telepizza as typical of the sort of rapidly-growing small European company that is unknown to British investors but offers enormous potential. Since it was floated last year on the Madrid bourse Telepizza's share price has more than tripled, and stockbrokers still rate it a buy.

Next week Guinness Flight launches two funds for investors wanting a stake in smaller companies outside of the UK. The Global Smaller Companies fund will build a portfolio of smaller company shares across the world, while the European Smaller Companies fund will invest in small and mid-sized companies in Europe outside of the UK.

Investing in smaller companies is currently the vogue among investment managers. Fidelity Investments is heavily promoting its smaller company trusts and small company specialist M&G believes now is the right time to get back into small companies.

The reason is that during the great bull run that swept world stock markets until the recent turmoil, smaller companies lagged behind as giant stocks such as Glaxo, Wellcome and HSBC soared away.

A large gap opened between the valuations of big blue chip companies and smaller company shares, which investment managers now expect will close. The first evidence has come from the recent stock market rally, in which smaller company stocks have generally remained firm while blue chips have suffered.

Andrew Couch, Guinness Flight's head of equities, said: "Now is a great environment for smaller companies. Long-term low inflation, low interest rates and a low cost of capital benefit smaller companies all round the world. They have already produced the profits growth, but we've not yet seen it in the share performance."

Simon Davies, an investment adviser at Berry Asset Management in Chelsea, says the timing is excellent for smaller company investment — but only in the UK, Europe and the US, not the Far East or Japan. He said: "The timing, in terms of pure economics, is right. But our view is that things will continue to look very difficult in the Far East."



Even Pamela Anderson's charms could not help Pizza Hut to halt the relentless rise of Telepizza

Others are less sure about the strength of the smaller companies argument. Mark Dampier, of Churchill Investments, said: "There's a big but. The argument seems to be that small companies have done badly for the past five years so in the next five years they will automatically do better. It's an oversimplification. Because of technology, a lot of big companies can behave like small companies, with very nicely run operations which keep an eye on costs."

The volatility of smaller company funds is also a cause of concern. Mr Dampier added: "European smaller companies are as volatile as Hong Kong or even worse. You can bet that when the US falls 10 per cent, Europe will fall much further. You find that smaller companies are either top of the pops or pretty awful."

Mr Davies agrees. He said: "For quite considerable periods of time these funds will be out of favour. Small company shares tend to move in fits and starts."

A smaller company fund is not the right move for a first-time investor, says Mr Davies, but it makes a good alternative to anyone who might previously have been tempted to buy emerging markets funds.

"If you want to buy an emerging market fund, why not buy US smaller companies rather than buying Brazil? It makes a lot more sense."

However, it may be suitable for the younger, less risk-averse investor who has enough cash to put money aside for the long term. Stephen Lansdown, joint managing director of Hargreaves Lansdown, said: "If I was talking to a first-time investor, I doubt if I would recommend this fund, but for someone with adequate funds and who can look ten years out, then this is OK."

Is Guinness Flight the right home for an investor wanting to put money into a smaller company fund? Every big investment company offers a UK smaller-company unit trust, though funds specialising outside the UK are less common. Mr Davies said: "Guinness Flight has good figures in the US and Asia, but in the UK and Japan they are third and fourth quartile. I like the story on smaller companies, but I do have concerns about Guinness Flight — do they have the experience to get this fund to perform?"

Hargreaves Lansdown shares similar concerns. Mr Lansdown said: "I wouldn't talk anybody out of buying a Guinness Flight fund, but neither would they be my first choice. They are middle of the road for growth and not as consistently good as Schroders or Perpetual."

Rating:
Berry Asset Management: ★★
Churchill Investments: ★★
Hargreaves Lansdown: ★★
Products graded from ★ (poor) to ★★★★★ (outstanding).

AMP members start counting their cash

Two million members of Australia Mutual Provident (AMP) voted overwhelmingly this week to approve the life insurer's plans to demutualise and float on the Australian and New Zealand stock markets. Thousands of UK members of AMP voted by post before the general meeting in Sydney on Thursday. A total of 17,000 qualifying customers resident in the UK will now receive an estimated windfall of £2,500 on flotation next May.

The flotation will turn AMP into one of the tenth largest listed companies in Australia. A general meeting and members' vote was held at a concert hall in Darling Harbour, Sydney, on Thursday and 98 per cent of people who voted, voted in favour. The mutual needed a 75 per cent vote in favour in order to press ahead with the plans.

Only UK residents who hold qualify-

ing policies with AMP UK and London Life, which merged with AMP in 1989, will benefit from windfall shares. Members of Pearl, which is owned by AMP, will not receive shares because Pearl is a proprietary company.

Nor will members of subsidiary companies of London Life. Policyholders with London Life Linked Assurances and London Life Managed Fund will not qualify because they were not given membership at the time of the 1989 merger. This also applies to some AMP subsidiary companies based in Australia.

A similar general meeting prior to AMP's merger with London Life in 1989, so many members turned up to vote at a hall in the Barbican in London that the meeting broke down and had to be reconvened in the Café Royal.

The board of AMP recommended

demutualisation last December and a prospectus is now expected to be issued in March or April, followed by a listing in May. Each member will receive an average of 500 free shares which will be quoted in Australian dollars. David Davies, deputy managing director of AMP (UK) said the insurer had not made a final decision on whether shares would also be listed on the UK stock market. A UK listing is expected in 1999.

He added: "We are expecting the shares to be worth the equivalent of £3.99 to £4.70 each, giving members an average £2,500 windfall. We are currently looking into setting up a service to allow people to deal if they wish to sell their shares or buy more. We are still in the process of looking at ways to do this, and the service will be cheap but probably not free."

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WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

When three days means eight days

From Mr G.C. Bartram

Sir, I read with interest Gavin Lumsden's article (The Elm a day reason cheques take so long, November 15). But what infuriates me is the length of time it takes to credit cash to the recipient's bank account.

My son banks with the Royal Bank of Scotland in one town, but at present lives in another. Recently, I paid £250 into the Royal Bank of Scotland in a third town on a Wednesday. I was assured he would be able to withdraw the money two days later on Friday; but on that day he was told it had not been credited to his account.

On the other hand money withdrawn from an account is debited instantly. It seems that what is sauce for the kitchen is not sauce for the cat.

Yours faithfully,
G. BARTRAM,
Eldon House,
Heighington,
Newton Aycliffe,
Co Durham.

November 17, at 2.30 pm, I transferred one cheque per account to my son's account in Kirkcaldy.

The local cheque clearance time is said to be three working days not counting the day that the cheque arrives in his account. We took that to mean that he would have access to the cash on Friday.

However, I discovered that it would take five working days to transfer the money which means that it will not arrive in my son's account until next Tuesday, making a total time for the transfer of eight actual days.

Why? Because the Co-op is an English bank. Does it work that way from an English bank branch to the Bank of Scotland in Scotland. I wonder?

I did actually mention your article last Saturday citing the Co-op as one of the slowest banks in the cheque transfer league. This seemed not to make any difference.

Yours faithfully,
KEN HARTSHORNE,
Airlie Cottage,
East End, Freuchie,
Fife,
Scotland.

From Mr Ken Hartshorne

Sir, My personal account is in Glenrothes, my business account is with the Co-operative Bank Direct, a telephone banking service. On Monday

More answers please, Sun Alliance

From Mr Robin Fish

Sir, Despite being appalled by your report (How £5,000 rose to just £5,004) about how exorbitant commissions had cut Mr Gerrard's pension investment to a paltry return of 0.01 per cent, I am even more concerned that Royal Sun Alliance's return on the remaining £2,500 was no more than a compound 5.14 per cent rate.

Bearing in mind that the traditional return by pension companies is supposed to be

about 12 per cent compound, I would have expected his investment to be worth at least £13,600 after allowing for the loss of £2,500 in commissions.

I believe that Royal Sun Alliance has even more explaining to do before you let this story rest.

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN FISH,
Thornhill,
27 Balcombe Road,
Haywards Heath,
West Sussex.

Fun with faxes and banks

From Mr Gordon C. Smith

Sir, Can you explain the logic in a reply I received from my bank's Customer Correspondence Centre? I had tried to fax a letter to my regional office and, having first been told the number I always used was no longer in use and then receiving no answer from the new number given, I wrote to complain that it was unrealistic today to make faxing a message so difficult (no fax-number is on the bank's letterhead).

The reply reads: "Due to a recent reorganisation, all correspondence is now dealt with by our head office. We did not advise our account holders of the change in fax numbers because very few customers use the facility and those who wish to normally ring us to obtain the fax number beforehand."

I need hardly add that the new fax number was not printed at the head nor did my correspondent give it to me!

Yours faithfully,
GORDON C. SMITH,
Saffron House,
34 High Street,
Saffron Walden, Essex.

It was love at first Pep...

There aint a ISA Savings system in the land wot I'd swap for me dear ole PEPS!!



From Miss Paola Revello

Sir, I have fallen in love... No, not with the shampoo and not either with the latest sexy tycoon. It's very serious, I've fallen in love... with the Pep. What shall I do? It's such a long-lasting relationship, it is so reliable, trustworthy, even flexible and I have to say so simple, that kind of simplicity you can just fall over.

I am certainly not the only one to feel so strongly about this greatest saving means. We have taken probably some time to trust and understand it, to believe it would give us the opportunity really to save tax and grow our capital in complete flexibility. But now we are all convinced and we actually enjoy it.

Now comes the big question. Why the Government wants to put an end to all

this? Is it not in the Government's interest to teach people how to save for their future? Is it not in its interest finally to admit that the Pep gives a great boost to the economy?

Obviously we cannot judge the Isa (individual savings account) as it seems still protected by tight security. But is it really wise even to think about abolishing one good saving system that is proven before even knowing how the next one is going to perform?

Let's then please raise our voices, let's make sure our point of view is heard, before it is too late, before the fate of the Pep will be decided and our saving future heavily compromised.

Yours faithfully,
PAOLA REVELLO,
137 Roll Gardens,
Gants Hill, Essex.

CGT ALLOWANCES - OCTOBER 1997

The indexed rise for calculating the indexation allowance on assets disposed of in October 1997

Month purchased	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
January	0.931	0.837	0.749	0.657	0.565	0.544	0.437	
February	0.922	0.829	0.736	0.651	0.559	0.538	0.427	
March	1.009	0.919	0.825	0.719	0.649	0.585	0.452	0.420
April	0.968	0.882	0.799	0.683	0.633	0.567	0.508	0.395
May	0.964	0.884	0.793	0.675	0.630	0.565	0.502	0.387
June	0.949	0.880	0.788	0.672	0.631	0.565	0.498	0.382
July	0.948	0.870	0.790	0.675	0.636	0.567	0.495	0.381
August	0.947	0.862	0.773	0.670	0.631	0.562	0.478	0.377
September	0.948	0.855	0.770	0.671	0.623	0.558	0.481	0.368
October	0.945	0.847	0.759	0.659	0.620	0.550	0.457	0.357
November	0.930	0.840	0.754	0.653	0.605	0.543	0.450	0.346
December	0.933	0.836	0.755	0.651	0.601	0.544	0.446	0.343

The 12 month rise for disposals by individuals on or after April 6, 1985 (April 1, 1985 for companies) is the month in which the allowable expenditure was incurred, or March 1982 where the expenditure was incurred before that month

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Clare Stewart says that collectors of all ages still go wild for teddy bears

Bear essentials for buyers

The saleroom prices of Clarice Cliff pottery or Victorian wildlife paintings may fluctuate according to fashion but, say auctioneers, teddy bear collectors are less fickle. Their devotion is lifelong and unwavering.

With a number of pre-Christmas toy sales coming up at auction houses, it is a busy time of the year for teddy bears. On December 8 Christie's has its fifth annual teddy bear sale and this year is also commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Margarete Steiff, the founder of the leading German toy and teddy bear maker.

Together with vintage British and American bears, the Christie's sale includes a large number of Steiff bears, Steiff toys and associated memorabilia. Among these are bears dating from the early days of production in 1903 through to distinguished modern bears.

"It is a very buoyant market and the interest is worldwide," says Leyla Maniera, Christie's teddy bear specialist. Estimates for bears in the December sale range from £100 to £8,000. Among those at the top end is an early Steiff bear,

made in 1904 and in very good condition, suggesting that it has never seen active service as a child's toy. Just a little older is "Jonny", a large white Steiff bear, 28 inches high and dating from 1905.

Despite the high prices that some rare bears can fetch — the world record is £110,000 — you do not have to be very wealthy to start collecting. "Almost any bear with a maker's label made before 1970 is of interest to collectors,"

said Constance King, a bear and doll expert, whose book *The Century of the Teddy Bear* has just been published (Antique Collectors Club, £25).

Bears made between 1940 and 1970 can still be found for less than £100, says Ms King, while bears from the 1920s and 1930s are particularly desirable. For these, expect to pay upwards of £700.

Earlier examples, however, may cost thousands of pounds, depending on the

style of bear, its condition and origins. Teddy bears as a toy were less fashionable in the Sixties and Seventies so examples of well-made bears of the period are harder to find.

Collectors' interest in bears was first seen in the early 1980s, says Ms King, led initially at least by an interest from gay men in the US, inspired by Evelyn Waugh's novel *Brideshead Revisited* and Aloysius, the teddy bear companion of Sebastian Flyte.

buying purely because of an emotional rather than financial attachment. If it is a love of teddy bears that inspires you, then the advice is simple: buy what you like.

But if you wish to balance both interests, the experts say there are some key pitfalls to avoid. Beware the modern limited edition bears, says Constance King, because they are not necessarily a good investment. "Often, so-called limited edi-

tion bears are just a basic bear but with a customised name added," she says. It is also worth checking just how limited is the edition; it may run into thousands.

The danger with such toys is that they are bought as an investment, and then kept pristine in their boxes. Consequently, there could be hundreds around in the future.

Similarly, quality reproduction bears made in the traditional style are in numerous supply. So even if kept in perfect condition they are unlikely to be rare and therefore sought after in the future.

A little more interesting as potential investments are artists' bears. These are hand-made bears, dressed in antique or expensive fabrics, and often unique. "These could be valuable in the future but only time will tell which makers will be in demand," says Ms King.

Older bears, usually taken to mean those dating up until the 1960s, remain the most desirable and most valuable, so much so that finding good bears is increasingly difficult. National and regional auctions of toys and dolls are one place to buy, although buying outside London does not necessarily mean lower prices.

Specialist toy and doll dealers can also be found at the many antique fairs around the country, and there are events such as the London International Antique and Artists Dolls, Miniatures and Teddy Bears Fair, which is held five times a year in Kensington Town Hall, London. The next fair is on February 15, with another on April 26 (0181-693 5432 for further details).

If you are buying older bears, good condition counts for as much as a maker's label. Also look for features such as unusual colours that may mean it is a rarer variety bear. Steiff bears are the most desirable, says Leyla Maniera. "They may not be the rarest but they hold their price."

Phillips, the auction house, has a Steiff bear as the centrepiece of its Christmas Toys and Dolls sale on Decem-

ber 16. The bear dates from 1905 and is in the style of a dancing bear, complete with muzzle, and has an estimate of £5,000 to £7,000, but it could well fetch more.

Yvonne Bentley of Phillips says that other noted German manufacturers include Schuco, Bing, and Gebrüder Stüssing, whose output included Peter Bears. These were made to look rather more like real bears and came with alarming-looking teeth. The idea backfired, however. The bears frightened children and production stopped. Because relatively few were made, Peter Bears now fetch good prices.

English manufacturers are also sought-after, with leading names including Farnell, Chad Valley, Chiltern and Merrythought. "British bears are fighting back," says Kerry Taylor at Sotheby's. While prices for these manufacturers have risen strongly, they can still be found for less than many German makes and are a good starting point for novice collectors.

As with almost any other antique, provenance or knowing something of the history of an item adds value. This can take the form of association with a famous person or event. Teddy Edward, for example, fetched £35,000 at auction last year as the bear from *Watch with Mother*.

Value will be added if there is information about the previous owner, whoever the owner was. Among the lots at the Christie's sale is a German bear that is now a little battered, with an eye missing, but with a picture of his original owner, a young girl called Gwen, standing next to the then youthful bear in 1915. His price is estimated at £150-£200.

Contemporary connections are also valuable. Two limited edition Steiff bears are being auctioned at the Christie's sale in aid of Save the Children. The bears recently sailed around the world on the Save the Children Yacht in the 1996-97 BT Global Challenge Race.

For novice collectors looking for more information, the sale catalogues issued by auction houses can often provide much useful information about different manufacturers and types of antique teddy bears.

Makers such as Merrythought, based in Telford, also have collectors' clubs for enthusiasts, while other sources of information include museums, many of which have doll and toy collections.

Forthcoming sales include: Christie's, December 8 (0171-581 7611); Bonhams, December 11 (0171-393 3900); Phillips, December 16 (0171-629 6602); Sotheby's, May 28 (0171-493 3060).

Fair opportunity to check up on your antiques

A top antiques fair provides a far greater range of both antiques and dealers under one roof than any town or city can offer in such a concentrated area.

This weekend's Fine Art & Antiques Fair at Olympia, West London, is no exception, with 250 exhibitors, many of whom are members of the British Antique Dealers' Association (Bada).

Potential buyers certainly find it convenient to compare pieces with competitive prices, notably in period furniture.

All items on sale have been examined by expert committees to ensure that both the identification and labelling are correct. This is carried out by Bada members or the London & Provincial Antique Dealers' Association, academics or museum curators.

As a typical example, a pair of Victorian silver candlesticks which had been converted to take electricity with cut-glass bowls to hold the lamp were rejected — because the bowls were not contemporary.

Many investors like fairs in order to check on the correct date and identification — as well as the current value for insurance purposes — of pieces. Most events will not allow you to take personal antiques in, but take colour photographs of antiques, remembering to take one of the back, particularly for porcelain, and noting any marks on silver and ceramics, as well as dimensions.

Visitors to Olympia should not miss the loan exhibition. Miniatures, engraved 18th-century glass and medals commemorating the secret allegiance to the Jacobite cause, have been lent by Drambuie. A range of outstanding oak chairs from the 15th to 17th centuries, used by the

Aberdeen Burgess of Trade, never lent before, are on show, as is a remarkable 17th-century group of naive portraits of the Erskine family from the House of Dum in Scotland.

There are many modestly priced pieces suitable for Christmas: silver wine funnels, Stilton scoops, tankards, nutcrackers and lobster picks, alongside exquisite Flemish and German woodcarvings of angels from the 15th century.

One innovation is the "touch tours" organised for the blind and partially sighted. Working with the Royal National Institute for the Blind, ten dealers will help such visitors to feel works of art including jewellery, textiles and bronzes.

Pairs of glass decanters are popular, according to Christine Bridges. A good Regency pair has increased from £300 to £500 in 1992 to £500 to £800 and for Victorian from £200 to £300 to £350 to £550 today.

Stylish mahogany side tables have the benefit of being both decorative and useful. A George II card table, circa 1750, is offered by Halliday's of Dorchester-on-Thames, for £9,800, up from £6,500 to £7,000 five years ago, according to Tracy Hodges.

Bronzes, particularly equestrian, are a firm market. Ted Few, a London specialist, has a bronze statue of King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy on a horse, 27 inches in height, signed and dated 1917 by Walter Winans, the Flemish artist, for £6,500, up from £1,500 to £2,000 a decade ago.

The Olympia fair is open from 11am to 7pm today and 11am to 5pm tomorrow.

CONAL GREGORY



Ninety years on: a Steiff bear with a chair on which he was photographed in 1907 (£5,000-£7,000)



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Is the smaller company making a comeback?



Anne Ashworth looks at the likely contents of Brown's consultative Budget

Green feeling prompts nerves



Inherit the earth — at a price

One of the tax-raising targets for next week's green Budget could be the £26 billion that is inherited each year (Caroline Merrell writes).

In spite of the vast fortune changing hands, the Exchequer only manages to raise about £1.4 billion from the 18,000 estates that end up paying inheritance tax. According to research from IFA Promotion, the organisation that promotes independent financial advice, under present rules £900 million of this tax could be avoided. At present only estates above £215,000 are taxed. It is also possible to give away certain amounts of

money before death without paying tax. A radical overhaul of the IHT rules could in future hit people such as Susan Opie, above, a 34-year-old book editor with HarperCollins. Ms Opie's grandmother died ten years ago, leaving Ms Opie as the only heir to the estate, the major part of the inheritance was a house in the country. Ms Opie said that the sale of the house raised "several thousand pounds" — the average size of an inheritance today is £18,000. If Ms Opie's grandmother had lived in the South East, then it is quite possible that her estate would have been above the

£215,000 exemption limit. Any amount above this is taxed at 40 per cent.

Ms Opie has recently decided to invest the money, after leaving it languishing in a building society for close to a decade. As deposit rates have not kept up with inflation over this period, Ms Opie's lump sum is now worth far less than it was when she inherited. Ms Opie said: "I decided in the end to put quite a lot of the money in to a personal pension. I was not aware until I went to my financial adviser that it was possible to put a lump sum into a personal pension."

Considerable speculation surrounds the contents of Tuesday's green Budget, despite the Treasury's valiant efforts to reassure nervous taxpayers that the statement will be "not a long list of policy announcements, but rather a setting-out of various government aims". Many are not persuaded that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will be content merely to foreshadow changes rather than introduce immediate reforms.

The Treasury is promising that there will be no retrospective measures in the Chancellor's statement. But Maurice Fitzpatrick, of Chantrey Vellacott, the accountants, says that it is still possible that the Inland Revenue may independently issue press releases detailing measures to be included in the 1998 Budget, but having effect from November 25, 1997. This would enable the Chancellor to close immediately any loopholes that he finds unusually intolerable.

Mr Fitzpatrick said there was a precedent: "In October 1996, new rules were introduced for companies buying back their own shares. These were made applicable from the date of the Inland Revenue press release."

Rumours have emerged this week that company cars and the tax-free pension lump sum could be within Mr Brown's sights. Every Chancellor for the past decade has been thought to be longed to abolish the tax-free pension lump sum. But any changes would be likely to be thrown open for discussion among interested parties for implementation at a later date. The taxation of company cars, another vexed issue, would also seem to merit further deliberation.

At present, the three million people who drive company cars pay less tax for their perk if their business mileage is

high. As Mr Brown believes that pollution would be reduced if they spent less time at the wheel, he is said to be considering taxing drivers for private mileage. To encourage employees to take public transport rather than drive their company cars, he would abolish the rule forcing workers to pay tax on season tickets provided by employers. However, observers point out that a private mileage basis for the taxation of vehicles would be as open to abuse as the old system and would create a bureaucratic nightmare for payroll departments.

Rumoured targets for immediate action include various capital gains and inheritance tax concessions. Potentially exempt transfers (PETS) are seen as especially vulnerable. The PETS rules permit you to transfer an infinite amount of assets to your heirs. Provided you survive for seven years, these gifts will escape inheritance tax. John Battersby, of KPMG, the accountant, believes that PETS could either be abolished or made subject to a cash limit.

Mr Fitzpatrick suggested that the capital gains tax allowance of £6,500 may also be vulnerable. Each year an individual can make tax-free capital gains up to this limit. He said: "Some would argue that there is no logical reason why such an allowance should exist. Capital gains are now taxed at the same rates as income tax. This means that there is no necessity for a separate capital gains tax allowance."

There is pressure on Mr Brown to provide some further detail on the individual savings account (ISA), his proposed replacement for the PEP and the Tessa. However, Mr Brown's wish to ensure that the new account appeals to the low-paid is apparently delaying an announcement.

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WEEKEND MONEY
is edited by Anne Ashworth

The Government this week delivered the strongest hint yet that it intends to wind down the state earnings-related pensions scheme (Serps). Speaking at a conference announcing proposals for the new-style stakeholder pensions, John Denham, the Pensions Minister, refused to say whether Serps, the additional state scheme for employees without company schemes, would be continued indefinitely.

He pointed out that the Government's manifesto only promised that Serps would be maintained for those in the scheme at present. In Opposition, Labour was savagely critical of Conservative plans to privatise entirely both the basic pension scheme and Serps. Stakeholder pensions are aimed at encouraging millions

Pension changes could lead to the end of Serps

more to save for their retirement. Many part-timers, women and others with irregular earnings end up relying on the State in their old age. According to figures from the Department of Social Security, about ten million people in the working population rely only on basic and Serps pensions.

The Government wants the private sector to work towards providing low-cost, flexible and secure second-tier pensions. It believes stakeholder

pensions can run alongside the current state system as well as occupational schemes. The DSS envisages that contributions for stakeholder pensions should be deducted from earnings at source. The money deducted should be invested by financial services companies to provide an adequate fund for retirement. The Government suggested investment trusts and unit trusts as possible investment vehicles.

In light of the recent scandal

involving the mis-selling of hundreds of thousands of personal pensions, the Government is keen to ensure that those companies which provide stakeholder pensions do so within a certain number of prescribed criteria — so-called "Kitemarking" of products.

Mr Denham clearly indicated that the companies which failed to clear up their pensions mis-selling problems quickly enough would be barred from being involved in providing the new pensions.

Mr Denham refused to be drawn on whether there had to be any degree of compulsion in the new schemes. He did indicate that many within the financial services community believed that compulsion was necessary.

CAROLINE MERRELL

Far East forecast still stormy

Asian economies, including Hong Kong, may be on the verge of an economic meltdown that could send share prices tumbling worldwide, according to some Far East fund managers. Many are increasing their investment in bonds, a traditional haven when stock markets are turbulent, and are urging investors to do the same.

The turmoil in Asia has been well publicised, particularly last month, when falls in Hong Kong sent London's FTSE 100 into a nosedive. Nevertheless, some optimists have started predicting a turnaround in the region.

This cuts no ice with Ashok Shah, senior portfolio manager with Old Mutual Asset Managers, who has just visited Asia and is convinced that the region lacks the leadership to steer it towards recovery. He said: "Too many politicians and industrialists have personally benefited from economic policies which have left their countries up to their neck in debt, their stock markets in ruins and their currencies devalued. They have two options. They could take the medicine now and go through pain, or die — I believe they have taken the death option."

As a result, he says, property values in Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia will soon crash, dragging their banks, which have lent heavily on real estate development, nearer bankruptcy. Banks are already struggling because many of the companies they lent to have overexpanded and cannot generate sufficient exports to pay their debts.

Mr Shah believes that traditional methods of valuing the region's companies are useless. He said: "Whether you look at earnings per share, price-earnings ratios, cashflow or dividend yield, you just don't know what you are



Hong Kong residents are still shopping but also spend a lot of time praying

buying." He scotches any idea of buying at the bottom of the market for at least another year, by which time normal conditions may have resumed.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong and Japan are under pressure. The former British colony is desperately trying to maintain its currency peg with the US dollar in the face of a concerted effort by international speculators. However, Mr Shah believes the peg will be abandoned within six months as high interest rates bite into the population's pockets, even though this will make the high level of debt increasingly burdensome. As the recession grows and inflation falls, there will be less motivation to invest in property, the backbone of the Hong Kong economy. In Japan, already the

victim of an eight-year recession, the outlook is just as bad as exports to its Asian neighbours dry up.

With the darkening stormclouds in the East, the rest of the world should not feel immune, says Mr Shah. Where they were once entrepreneurial, Asian manufacturers are now desperate and will sell their goods for any price they can get. The result is bad news for manufacturers worldwide, but good news for Western consumers who will get cheap goods and low inflation. However, this is just the environment where our own stock markets will suffer. Bonds and shares in blue-chip companies with no Asian interests are the best options.

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